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## Editorial

THE HISTORIC ESTRANGEMENT between evangel and evangelism is a serious contemporary problem of the Christian Church. Since by its very nature all aspects of Christianity are related to its evangel, the attempts to segregate the evangel into an evangelistic movement have embarrassed the main body of the Church. Propagation of the faith, evangelism, revivalism, protracted meetings, preaching missions, visitation campaigns, and a host of other words and phrases have come to mean that the evangel is necessarily unrelated to the continuing procedures of organized Christianity.

We have brought into this issue of RELIGION IN LIFE an important discussion of the contemporary issues of evangelism. Billy Graham and Nels Ferré have willingly co-operated in preparing annotations for an imaginary dialogue prepared by Wallace Gray. Actually the dialogue illustrates another of the indigenous aspects of the problem, for by tradition the scholar is expected to take a dim view of evangelism. Ferré establishes that insofar as he is concerned he thinks of himself as an evangelist. But it is clear that both sides are suspicious of each other, and while one uses the popular appeal to the unscholarly, the other uses the sometimes unclear words of historic and biblical theology. The shadow boxing gets nowhere, to be sure, and both are eventually forced to define terms. The issues become clear when biblical interpretation shows up. Doctrines of the Holy Spirit, Sin and Salvation, Virgin Birth, etc., are up one moment as biblical, then down the next minute as scholarly. The questions of redemption and suffering are unresolved because it appears that the evangelist settles for an easy determinism while the scholar is forced to search for an experience of truth.

It is always nice to end such a discussion by pronouncing some meaningless benedictus like "What we need is not just biblical foundations, nor just intellectual respectability, but a well-rounded balance of both." The fact is, however, that neither Graham nor Ferré have been able to provide such an ending. True, they talk about the whole gospel, and all that sort of thing, but the reader is left with a troubled intellectual conscience. A revivalist gets comfort from Graham for continuation of what he has always believed and is spurred to greater efforts; a scholar is likely to leave the discussion with a feeling of need for more tucking of the head underneath the academic wing. Somewhere out in the wide world there must be an answer that is more valid than a "Win My Chum" campaign on one hand, or an academic paradox on the other.

But, gentle reader, wasn't it a stimulating conversation?

E. S. B.

# Issues in Contemporary Evangelism

## I. Billy Graham Meets Nels Ferré

AN IMAGINARY DIALOGUE BY WALLACE GRAY  
ANNOTATIONS BY BILLY GRAHAM AND NELS FERRÉ

WALLACE GRAY, B.D., Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Bible, Religion, and Philosophy at Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas. He has worked out an imaginary dialogue between Dr. Ferré and Billy Graham, based on their published and unpublished utterances. The dialogue was submitted to both men for approval and comment. Dr. Graham inserted additional material which he felt was needed to clinch his side of the discussion; Dr. Ferré then inserted two brief replies to this new material. *The contributions of both are printed in italics.*

DURING HIS NASHVILLE CRUSADE, Billy Graham invited Nels Ferré to meet with him for conversation. Due to factors beyond the control of both men, that meeting never took place. I have tried to set down here what such a dialogue might have sounded like if it had occurred. However, since I am not thoroughly familiar with the events leading up to the near-encounter at Nashville, I have chosen a London setting as allowing me freer range in letting the two men converse.

It is to be hoped that there is such a thing as modest fulfillment of major purposes, for the aim in this brief dialogue is to fulfill two major purposes of philosophy and theology:

A major purpose of *philosophy* is to teach men to see alternatives. Too often statements on evangelism are not set closely enough beside other statements to reveal that here as elsewhere Christians confront significant choices. In this dialogue I seek to reveal two alternative views of evangelism.

A major purpose of contemporary *theology* is to find (not create) what we Christians really have in common beneath all our differences. I hope that this dialogue will reveal significant common ground between one leading evangelist and one leading theologian. This dialogue is a symbol of the fact that Christian people are coming out from behind their labels to talk with each other; it is a symbol of the fact that communication lines are up and singing again within Christendom!

SETTING: GRAHAM'S HOTEL ROOM SOMETIME DURING HIS LONDON CRUSADE

*Graham:* Dr. Ferré, I am glad we could get together for a visit about

evangelism. I've been wanting to hear your views, since we seem to differ on some crucial points.

*Ferré*: We also seem to agree on some crucial points.

G. But before we can do much good together we'd better settle the matter of names. Nearly everyone calls me "Billy," and nearly everyone calls you "Dr. Ferré." What shall we call each other?

F. (laughing): "Billy" seems easy and natural to me. Why don't you use whatever seems natural for you?

G. "Dr. Ferré" it shall be.

F. As long as you understand that I came for a friendly visit, not to teach a seminar.

G. Agreed. Dr. Ferré, I have learned a great deal from my critics. And I'm expecting to learn a great deal from you.

F. You are casting me in the wrong role, Billy. I hope you will come to think of me not mainly as a critic but as a fellow-evangelist. You see, the Gospel given me is basically *positive*, while my fighting biblicism, docetism and ecclesiolatry are secondary, but also of utmost importance in their place.<sup>1</sup>

G. (somewhat teasingly): I hope these big words do not conceal your opposition to the Bible, Christ, and the Church! (Then more seriously): I am frankly concerned about the seeming distance of much theology from both the average man and the Bible.

F. The abolition of slavery and of polygamy in the West seems to have been far removed both from the desires of many common men and from the literal meaning of some passages in the Bible. . . . But I do not intend to discuss our differing interpretations of the Bible—not right this minute anyway. I am more interested now in your procedure in reaching the "average man" during Crusades such as the present one.

G. Are you asking about our over-all strategy in evangelism?

F. No, I don't mean that. I am asking about your preaching. You talk to people in a way that, right from the start, tells them that you know something basic about them. I think I know what you say, but I would like to hear from you personally what spot you touch to gain people's attention and concern.

G. *I speak to man's sense of guilt and to his longing for happiness. Many people are deeply dissatisfied, frustrated and miserable. They see failure written over their personal and social existence, and they seek the*

<sup>1</sup> From Dr. Ferré's letter, August 1, 1957, concerning this dialogue.

*secret of happiness and peace. That secret is the very God against whom they are in revolt.*<sup>2</sup>

F. Why do you start with this stress on the search for security or happiness? Isn't that apt to bring people to Christ with the wrong motivation?

G. Of course. There are dangers in this approach as there are in any approach. The man who fretfully searches for happiness may never find it. Peter and the other disciples wanted Jesus to avoid suffering and death. Their emphasis upon success and happiness could have prevented them from becoming full disciples. To them he had not said, "Follow me and I will make you happy," but "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" and "Take up your cross and follow me."

F. Why, then, do you so often stress peace and happiness?

G. Because Jesus did! The first word of his Sermon on the Mount was "happy." He repeated the word eight times in that very sermon. *A universe in which righteousness is unrewarded and in which bliss is ultimately associated with wickedness rather than with faith in Christ, would lack moral justification.*

F. Would you agree that Jesus, in the Beatitudes, treated happiness more as a symptom than as a goal or lure of spiritual living?

G. Of course, but remember Jesus' great invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Jesus did not describe the blessed merely for the sake of description; he sought by this means to motivate the heavy laden to come unto him. Many religious people have the same attitude toward their religion which a man with a severe headache has toward his head: he knows he can't afford to give it up, but it hurts him to keep it.<sup>3</sup>

F. I agree. Luther said that many Christians envy the sinners their fun and the saints their joy because they don't have either one. However, with Elton Trueblood and others, I insist that proper attention be given to the remainder of the passage which you quoted from Jesus, particularly to the words, "Take my yoke upon you." Christianity is always threatened by our human tendency to make happiness or "rest" more central than Christ's yoke.

G. I expressed the same conviction when I wrote that "the higher the form of life, the greater is the ability (and willingness) to suffer."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See the first pages of Graham's books, *Peace With God* and *The Secret of Happiness* (both published by Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York).

<sup>3</sup> *The Secret of Happiness*, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> *The Secret of Happiness*, p. 27. The parenthetical phrase is Wallace Gray's but is in accord with the spirit of Graham's quotation.

F. Could we summarize our agreement thus far by saying that the Christian religion is the most demanding of all masters and the most rewarding of all givers?

G. Yes, I think so.

F. But isn't it hard to reach many people by the happiness approach?—for example, those who will not admit that they are either particularly happy or unhappy?

G. Yes, of course it is hard. I try to get at such people by pointing out that we Americans are a nation of EMPTY people. Our heads are crammed full of knowledge, but within our souls is a spiritual vacuum, *because multitudes lack a knowledge of the true God and the blessings of salvation in Christ.*

F. This seems to me a realistic description of many persons.

G. We complain that the youth of our country has lost its drive, its push, its willingness to get ahead. Every day I hear parents say that they don't know what's the matter with their children—they don't want to make an effort, they just want everything handed to them. Parents don't seem to realize that their well-educated, carefully brought up children are actually, like many of the parents themselves, empty inside. And why are they so empty? Because they don't know where they've come from, why they're here, or where they're going! <sup>5</sup>

F. Billy, you're getting ahead of me. You are already discussing the causes of this widespread empty feeling. I am still interested in the symptoms. I like your description in the first chapter of *Peace With God*. Do you mind if I read the paragraphs I am thinking of?

G. Not at all.

F. (reading from a book which he picks up from the writing table): "Many are floundering in this time of crisis and finding that their efforts are leading them not up but only further down into the pit. Last year the American people spent one hundred and twenty-five million dollars on fortune-tellers alone! One hundred and twenty-five million dollars given by frantic frightened men and women to equally misguided people, to tell them the wrong answers to their pleading questions.

"Last year over sixteen thousand Americans, who couldn't find even the wrong answers, took their own lives in preference to wandering any further in this man-made jungle we call civilization."

Further down the page you write: "America is said to have the highest per capita boredom of any spot on earth! We know that because we have

<sup>5</sup> *Peace With God*, p. 17.

the greatest variety and greatest number of artificial amusements of any country. People have become so empty that they can't even entertain themselves. They have to pay other people to amuse them, to make them laugh, to try to make them feel warm and happy and comfortable for a few minutes, to try to lose that awful, frightening hollow feeling—that terrible dreaded feeling of being lost and alone."

G. Dr. Ferré, in my opinion, boredom is one of the sure ways for a person to measure his own inner emptiness.

F. You're so right! Basically, many men are still afraid of the dark. They whistle, they turn on high-powered lights, they "amuse" themselves, but deep down they know that the reality which they fear and which they interpret mostly as night, is still there. . . . But how do you get people to recognize this?

G. Not by posing as their authority! *Beyond a guilty conscience which hails every man before God's judgment bar, the real authority with which every sinner must reckon is God's revealed word in the Bible.* When men begin to praise Billy Graham instead of God, that very day my evangelistic effectiveness is ruined, for God will not share his glory with any man.

F. I admire your concern to keep God central. You have probably already learned that refusing praise is a sure way to get blamed for insincerity or, what is worse, to get more praise!

G. I have, but many inquirers take my words at face value. We try to assist them by integrating them immediately into a church and into a Bible course.

F. Fine, but I am somewhat disturbed by your use of the Bible both in preaching and in your courses. Or, to put it more accurately, I disagree with the underlying assumptions reflected in your use of the Bible.

G. What do you find fault with?

F. I would rather not answer that question directly, since I am not here primarily to criticize. Would it be all right with you if I tried to answer your question by stating my own understanding of the Bible?

G. Certainly. I am eager to know it.

F. My main belief is that the true Bible, or the Bible truly used, is alive. The false Bible is only a book. Through the Bible, God speaks now! It is his voice for our need now.

G. And our need is great! Time is running toward midnight. The human race is about to take the fatal plunge. As I wrote in *Peace With God* (p. 23): "Which way shall we turn? Is there any authority left? Is there a path we can follow out of the darkness? Can we find a codebook



that will give us the key to our dilemmas? The answer is, we do have a codebook; we do have a key. We do have authority. It is found in the ancient and historic book we call the Bible." *The Apostle Paul found the greatest treasure of the Hebrews in the fact of their possession of the sacred oracles of God, and one of the Twentieth Century's greatest blessings is a true Bible—even if many do not use it truly, nor use it at all.*

F. The Bible is ancient and historic, but, as you have so urgently suggested, it is not merely something God has said once upon a time. It is not chiefly the record of the past. It is no dead book telling of live events. The Bible itself is alive. It is electric, a bundle of energy, a meeting with the living God. The Bible is the shock of the sacred.

G. I would add that it is the *authentic and authoritative* story of salvation which contains the great all-prevailing truth concerning life, peace, eternity, and heaven. It has a single, clear, bold message for every living being—the message of Christ and his offer of peace with God.

F. Good!

G. But I thought we disagreed! We've been talking several minutes, and I have yet to detect one difference between us on the Bible.

F. There is a slight but important difference of emphasis. You treat the Bible as a codebook; I treat it as a bundle of energy. You treat it as an infallible authority; I treat it as a place of encounter with the supreme authority, God.

G. *Surely I do not deny that God is the supreme authority, nor that the Bible is a place where readers encounter God.* I do not yet see what you find wrong with my emphasis.

F. To be more specific let us look at an idea which you expressed in *Peace With God* (p. 27). Your approximate words were: "The true Christian denies no part of the Bible."

G. Isn't that your view?

F. No.

G. What in the Bible would you deny?

F. That the world is flat and covered by a hard shell called the firmament; that polygamy and slavery and the total destruction of Israel's enemies were or are the will of God—to mention the major types of things which I deny and which I believe you do too.

G. *You surprise me. I thought you were going to refer to the virgin birth of God's Son, or to the sinlessness of Jesus Christ. These are doctrines clearly taught in the Bible. I doubt that the Bible teaches as a revealed doctrine that the earth is flat; rather, the writers seem to use the language,*



of appearance much as modern men—even scientists do—in everyday language. Nor do I think the Bible anywhere commands polygamy (but monogamy), and while slavery may have been a result of sin, and destruction by war a judgment upon it, I don't believe that either slavery or war would exist in a perfect society.

F. But Billy, there's your trouble! The Bible also doesn't "clearly" teach the two doctrines you mention. The evangelist does not, of course, have the responsibility of scholarship that the theologian must assume. But if you will read my chapter on Incarnation in *The Christian Understanding of God or my Christ and The Christian* (both Harpers) on the topics of the virgin birth and the sinlessness of Jesus, you will find out how complicated the issues are biblically, historically, and theologically. The "clear" teaching can be used to hide the fuller Gospel of how God became incarnate, how the "sinless" was "made to be sin" for us and how God saves us in Christ. You evangelists can, as a matter of fact, help make our job as theologians, reporters, and deciders of God's saving truth for the world tougher than it should be precisely by your oversimplification of biblical issues. Please remember that.

G. I guess it is hard to look at things from the point of view of the other man's responsibility! I would remind you, however, of the danger of denying any one portion of the Bible merely because of our subjective difficulties. Doesn't the one denying run the risk of becoming a total skeptic concerning the Bible? After a while he has about ten million different kinds of Bibles because one scholar says this and one scholar says that.<sup>6</sup> Can one believe in an authority which has faults in it?

F. Let me ask you a question in turn: Would a miner cease mining for uranium in an area where this substance had been found, merely because some rocks did not contain it?

G. But I believe that the men who wrote the Bible were guided by the Holy Spirit, and the prophets and apostles to whom revelation came tell us that by inspiration they mined the very Word of God, and not a mixture of wood, hay and stubble.

F. I also believe that the Holy Spirit guided the men who wrote the Bible.

G. Can the Holy Spirit err? Don't you believe that the Holy Spirit inspired both the thoughts expressed and the choice of words used by the prophets and apostles?

<sup>6</sup> From an interview reported in *The New York Times Magazine*, April 21, 1957.

F. No, and I'm not sure you always do either. Paul speaks of our having the treasures of Christ in earthen vessels (or crackable pottery). He explains that God does this "to show that transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." He also says that we are "ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life."

G. *What Paul had difficulty with was not the idea that the scriptures are the very oracles of God (see Romans 3:2) but with their use in a legalistic way that concealed the need of trusting Christ as Redeemer. Christ came in the vessel of earthly flesh also, but he was sinless. I cannot accept the notion that the Bible is merely a product of men's ingenuity.*

F. I can understand why this would be a problem, but you say in *Peace With God* (p. 30) that the men who wrote the Gospels differed widely in personality and writing style. Why would this be?

G. Because God willed it that way.

F. Exactly! He willed not to violate human personality even for the high purpose of SAVING personality, for God will not let even HIS ends justify wrong means.<sup>7</sup> . . . But I do not want to be misunderstood. I approve wholeheartedly of much of what you derive from the Bible and of the urgent appeal you make by means of its words. My main objection to your use of the Bible is that it seems to appeal to the non-Christian's ignorant reverence for a Holy book.

G. *Surely Jesus was not uncomfortable when he appealed to the authority of the Old Testament. (And the fact that he said as much about hell as about heaven indicates that he thought there are limits to the rights of finite persons in their relation to God.) Also, I'm not sure that inspiration "violated" human personalities; perhaps it rather lifted them to a divine ideal, and the rest of us are contaminated by unbelief and rebellion. True religion increases one's intellect rather than eliminates it.*<sup>8</sup>

F. It's good to hear you say that true religion embraces the intellect. Nevertheless, I am afraid that the fact remains that your particular approach to the Bible tends to inhibit rather than stimulate the mind. Your almost total disregard for the remarkable progress in biblical studies during the past 100 years encourages ignorant rather than enlightened awe. You prejudice the convert or rededicated Christian against an inquiring, though

<sup>7</sup> Ferré's ideas in this section have been drawn largely from his pamphlet, *Meeting God Through the Bible*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1954.

<sup>8</sup> *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1955, p. 21.

reverent, attitude toward the serious problems and exciting possibilities involved in biblical studies.

*G. I certainly hope that you are wrong in this criticism! At any rate, you too must be aware that the Bible critics seem to come under fire continually from the next generation of Bible critics—but the Book stands from age to age.*

*F.* This of course does not mean that one way of using or interpreting the Bible is just as good as another. There is a real question when you write in *Peace With God* (p. 29) that the Bible "has no need for special interpretation." In my opinion the Bible needs special interpretation in the sense of light from the best literary, historical, and theological knowledge that man possesses. It is true that no special interpretation is necessary with regard to the major theme of the Bible—God's redeeming activity. That is, no special interpretation is necessary for most people to see that the theme is there and is central. But certainly interpretation of a highly informed kind is necessary to work out the implications of that theme and to explain the passages which either are or seem inconsistent with it.<sup>9</sup>

*G.* If I understand your meaning I can go along with you here. It's a relief to get back to something we have in common!

*F.* (relaxing into a grin and then proceeding seriously): We have some major things in common. I particularly like your affirmation that through the magnifying glass of his hopes God ponders the human heart.<sup>10</sup>

*G.* I am grieved that so many ignore this God of hope. Instead, though their soul is screaming for God, they simply throw in another aspirin and say, "Be quiet, soul."

*F.* When you say you grieve over people who are fighting shy of God, I like your mood better than when you speak of God's laughing at rebellious sinners.

*G.* According to Scripture, God both grieves and laughs! In the Second Psalm you can read the words, "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision."

*F.* Yes, and in Psalm 137 you can read, "Happy shall he be who takes [the Babylonians'] little ones and dashes them against the rock!" The fact that those words are in the Bible does not make me want to place them side by side with Jesus' Beatitudes!

<sup>9</sup> Graham has commented on this passage in writing: "*The Bible says that it is not the critics that we are to depend on for the special interpretation of Scripture—even if scholarship can throw much light upon it—but on the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21) by whom it was revealed.*" Ferré toward the end of this dialogue agrees with Graham on the decisive importance of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in a *Life* article on Graham, May 27, 1957.

G. But God is holy as well as loving, a judge as well as a father. His judgment is what makes his grace so great; because the alternative to grace is so awful. *Perhaps the acts of divine judgment in history should be regarded as a merciful warning to survivors, of the final judgment and doom of the unpenitent.*

F. I partially agree with your strong emphasis upon God's judgment. I can even agree with your belief in God's laughter, provided the laughter is not bitter and vindictive.

G. I primarily had in mind the conviction that God knows his purposes will be victorious and therefore sees every human act of rebellion and obstruction as puny indeed.

F. Evangelists need to be as clear as possible about God, for the glad news they bring concerns him. Every side of God needs to be presented to the potential convert—his holiness, his power, his spirituality, his immanence and transcendence, and his love. You do a good job of using God's attributes to appeal to men at the various levels of fear, duty, and love. However, you are not, in my opinion, as strong as you might be theologically, for you simply line the attributes up without any thoroughgoing attempt to show which is most fundamental.

G. But they are all true, aren't they?

F. Yes, but *Agape* or God's Love must be used to interpret all the rest of his qualities. Only thus does a truly unified and wholly moral picture of God emerge. Otherwise you end up with a mixed perspective. Mixed perspectives on God are, in the long run, far more deadly than mixed drinks! They can result in Inquisitions.

G. Now you *have* aroused my curiosity! *Surely righteousness and justice are as fully definitive of God as is his love.* Just who is your God anyway?

F. The transcendent and immanent Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! To be more accurate, I should perhaps say, "The transcending and co-inhering Father who is more than the universe and who also interpenetrates the universe, much as the field of gravity interpenetrates the field of electromagnetism." Another, though closely related, matter at the center of my theology is my belief that God or his love (the two are synonyms for me) works both passively and actively throughout the whole universe.

G. What do you mean by "passively and actively?"

F. By the passive working of God I mean the impersonal, frequently harsh elements of life. I interpret these in the light of God's ultimate purposes and loving sovereignty.

G. And I interpret them in the light of Adam's fall and the Devil's cunning!

F. In my view God did not simply permit suffering and precariousness as consequences of sin; he also intended them as preparations and schooling.

G. But where does Christ come into this?

F. It is he for whom God prepares us. God came conclusively and fulfillingly through Jesus. Jesus as the Christ is the supreme HAPPENING of Love, as you can see in my *Christ and the Christian*. The understanding of God through Incarnation, through the Holy Spirit and through the Church, as Agape, is decisive for my theology.

G. If I understand you in these latter statements, I agree. *But it would not be true to the New Testament, nor to the teaching of Christ, to minimize the holiness of God, and man's need of atonement, and the final doom of the unpenitent.* To change the subject, where does man fit into this scheme? Evangelism cannot use a theology which disregards him—no matter how many fine things the theologian says about God!

F. You can say that again! I believe that the natural man is sinful and that we need to be born again, and further changed and enabled by sanctifying grace. God's Love is sufficient for all these things.<sup>11</sup>

G. In my theology, if you could call it that, I like to start with the fact of the many different, often conflicting, opinions about God. I point out that in the Bible God reveals himself in such a way as to settle the conflicts but also to deepen the sense of his boundlessness.

F. How is that?

G. We so often seek to impose our limitations on God. If we can't do something, God can't either! Many people have difficulty with the biblical concept of God's hearing and answering simultaneous prayers from all over the world. For them I liken God to the ocean. The world's millions could come down to the beach and reach out their hands to be filled with sea water. They could each take as much as they wanted, as much as they needed—and still the ocean would remain unchanged. Its mightiness and power would be the same, the life in its unfathomable depths would continue unaltered, although it had supplied the needs of every single person standing with outstretched hands along its many shores.

So it is with God. He can be everywhere at once, heeding the prayers of all who call out in the name of Christ; performing the mighty miracles that keep the stars in their places and the plants bursting up through the

<sup>11</sup> This summary of Ferré's theology, as contained in his last few speeches, comes from his letter of August 1, 1957, which has been referred to above.

earth and the fish swimming in the sea. There is no limit to God. There is no limit to his wisdom. There is no limit to his power. There is no limit to his love. There is no limit to his mercy.<sup>12</sup>

F. (clapping his hands): That's a first-rate statement about God, provided we interpret these sentences in the light of Jesus' saying: "And the last shall be first!" . . . Now, how do you think this God saves sinners?

G. This is a matter which I am especially interested in as an evangelist. The Bible teaches that all men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. They have forfeited paradise and merited damnation. No mere man could satisfy the justice of God and help either himself or any other man. Only God's infinite Son could pay an infinite price for man's rebellion against the infinite God.

F. But why did a price have to be paid?

G. Because otherwise God would be a liar.

F. Why do you say that?

G. Because he had warned man of the serious consequences of disobeying the divine command, and for him to let man escape scotfree would make his warning a lie.

F. I can agree that sin and its consequences are serious without depending upon courthouse language to describe either. In the parable of the prodigal son, have you ever noticed that the boy deserves the wrath of his father? The most that he can expect is to be received back as a servant; yet his father receives him back as a son. No price is paid either. The elder brother doesn't have to plead or suffer in the prodigal's behalf. The father simply forgives his boy. I think we should take Jesus' cue and use the family as the primary analogy for God's attitude toward the sinner. A good father is less concerned with rules or penalties than he is with personal growth. Rules are important, but as you know from your own family experience, the father does not stop loving his children because of broken rules.

G. Of course not. But if he suspends all rules his love is sentimental and inconsistent. His children soon will not know what to expect from him. *Aren't we on surer ground when we get our theology from direct teaching rather than from parables?* Doesn't the Old Testament system of sacrifice find its fulfillment in Christ's death as "a ransom for many?"

F. Jesus' parables gives the most direct of all his teachings in the sense that they drive home a thought more vividly than any mere statement can

<sup>12</sup> *Peace With God*, p. 27.



do. Parables are not allegories, and so the meaning of most of them is crystal clear. One obvious point of the parable I referred to is that the prodigal did not know what to expect, because his father was so good! I am simply concerned to keep God's love the primary base for all his actions, strict or generous. Christ must not be interpreted as gentle while the Father is harsh, or as gracious while the Father is just. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Notice that this verse expresses reconciliation in personal rather than in juridical terms. Men are reconciled not to God's justice or wrath but to God himself.

G. Dr. Ferré, why did Christ have to come, if not to pay a price for man's sin?

F. To whom was the price paid and for what purpose? I object to the business-counter explanation of reconciliation as much as to the juridical. The Father through Christ enacted the love he already had. He did this for his children in order that they might begin to respond to him and to each other with the same kind of love. He did not have to "pay" himself or the Devil or man.

G. *The New Testament writings uniformly teach that Christ by his death offered an atonement for our sins, and they connect the idea of agape centrally with this.* Don't you believe we are saved by Christ's blood?

F. I do in the sense that loving suffering atones and is as social in its consequences as the sins for which it atones. However, I do not attach literal significance to the role of blood. Let me ask you, "Could Christ's death have been just as efficacious if he had been hanged?"

G. Not according to Scripture.

F. But you yourself interpret blood as the *symbol* of Christ's death in *Peace With God*, p. 97. This seems to place the emphasis upon the *fact* of his death more than upon its mode. *I think if you read my chapter on The Atonement in Christ and The Christian, you would be utterly surprised how much I make of the deepest meaning and reality of the vicarious atonement, and even how positively and unequivocally I write on the meaning and reality of the blood of Christ.*

However that may be, I am convinced that the greatest need of evangelism at this time, along with the work of the Holy Spirit, is for us to release the good news of the Gospel from the prison of stilted thought-forms that have made the Christian faith more and more of an anachronism throughout the world. Educated people in many lands have dismissed the Christian faith in staggering numbers, considering its world view outgrown. Yet nothing is more true than evangelical supernaturalism, centering in

Christ as the Son of God's Love and the kind of community which man finds in him. Nothing is more needed than to make available the primacy of the Gospel, man's right relation to God. The great news of the great God, however, has been hidden by the foothills of traditional theologies, developed over the centuries in connection with alien philosophies and world views. To get the clearest possible view of the high and holy Mountain of God in Christ as Holy Love and to worship there without reservation are man's greatest needs today.<sup>13</sup>

G. I am afraid that the stumbling block of the Gospel is more than a matter of terminology, and I am afraid that if you dispense with some of the terminology you may end up dispensing with the Gospel! As a case in point, do you believe that Christ had to die?

F. He was not *sent* to die. His martyr's death was called for only because men refused to accept fully his life. You see, I do not feel committed to maintain in every detail the Bible's sacrificial or predestinarian terminology.

G. (shaking his head sadly): I'm afraid I do see, and I cannot agree with this viewpoint at all.

F. I would emphasize the whole life, death, and resurrection of Christ when I speak of atonement. You do this in your chapter on "Why Jesus Came,"<sup>14</sup> but you tend to localize God's atoning work more than I do. . . . Perhaps we can find more room for agreement if we discuss how the benefits of atonement are appropriated. What must a man do to be saved?

G. The biblical answer is that he must repent, believe, and be born again. It is man who must repent and trust in Christ, but it is God who then gives the new birth.

F. So far we are together. Is repentance something that should happen on the mourners' bench?

G. It might happen there, but there are dangers in that emphasis. A very intelligent Christian leader once told me that at the time he was converted the demonstration of emotion expected of him by the preacher and congregation almost kept him from coming to God. Of course, biblical repentance involves emotion, intellect, and will. In the will or determination to forsake sin, however, we find the very heart of repentance. True repentance means more than the little girl who prayed, "Make me good—not real

<sup>13</sup> "Evangelism 1955!", an article written for "District Evangelism" (no. 3). This is the leaflet sent to District Superintendents of the Methodist Church by the General Board of Evangelism, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

<sup>14</sup> *Peace With God*.



good, but good enough so I won't get whipped."<sup>15</sup>

F. (chuckling and then proceeding): I appreciate your stress on the whole man. I define right religion as a man's whole response to what is most important and most real. In my thought it is as dangerous to minimize emotion as to overemphasize it.

G. I'll buy that. As Dr. W. E. Sangster, the great British Methodist preacher, says in his book, *Let Me Commend*, "The man who screams at a football or baseball game but is distressed when he hears of a sinner weeping at the cross and murmurs something about the dangers of emotionalism hardly merits intelligent respect."

F. When you preach on repentance, faith, and regeneration, do you try to paint the kind of life of which the sinner will repent?

G. Yes.

F. And the kind of life to which he will be reborn?

G. Yes.

F. You have been criticized for not preaching forthrightly enough on the sin of racial pride.

G. Perhaps those who have criticized me in this way have neither heard nor read my sermons!

F. In some cases that may be true, but other critics have studied your sermons very carefully. Some of these recognize that you condemn such sins as discrimination, but they accuse you of doing so in very general terms. They say that you confine your strongest statements to books and articles, while in your preaching you stress the more "acceptable" personal sins.

G. Even if this charge were wholly true (which I do not think), I could still point out that a man can only be brought to repent of the sins he already recognizes as sins.

F. Isn't the preacher obligated to help each hearer recognize a wider and deeper range of sin than he has been conscious of before?

G. Yes, and I try to do this, but the evangelist must not confuse his task with that of the Christian educator. He can only introduce people to Christ. It is up to the individual and the Church to help the acquaintance-ship along so that it profoundly touches all of life. I preach primarily as an evangelist. I write with more of an eye on supplementing my evangelism with instruction.

F. There is a distinction between explaining and proclaiming the Gospel, and I believe you are justified in appealing to it when your critics say there

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

is too little social content in your preaching. However, I personally do not think that the distinction needs to be stressed as much as the interrelatedness of education and evangelism. Very likely the word "educate" means to feed. Too much evangelism is mostly pleading. Too little evangelism is intellectual and moral feeding. Education on just such matters as race needs to broaden and to enrich evangelism, while evangelism needs to direct and to motivate education. Love and truth are one in God. When the Holy Spirit makes us Christians fully evangelical we shall know how to educate by prayer and love and how to evangelize by truth and thought.<sup>16</sup>

G. What you are saying here sounds very right; I will ponder it carefully.

F. I have appreciated your strong statements on race in your writings. When you wrote in *The Secret of Happiness* (p. 96) that there is no race problem for true Christians, I had to say "Amen!" Your further statements that the ground is level at the cross and that there are no second-rate citizens with God also hit the nail on the head.

G. I stressed in that book that men who find peace with God will then have a simpler task in making peace with each other. Peace with God implies the burial of vindictive, intolerant, and unchristian attitudes. I must add, Dr. Ferré, that our Crusades have not always been desegregated, but they are now. I and my Crusade colleagues have grown in our understanding of this problem.

F. The push of social unrest and upheaval has hurried many of us along into a fuller appreciation of the pull of God's purpose. This has happened with regard to race, and it is in the process of happening with regard to war.

G. We have sown flagrant human injustice, and we have reaped a harvest of racial strife. It is fashionable in some circles to tolerate current evils because of their tremendous complexity, and the knotty problems involved in any attempt to improve the state of affairs. But any problem which our selfishness and pride has produced, however complex it is, is our responsibility.

F. Whom do you mean when you say "our?"

G. All of us—Christians and non-Christians. Love is due not just to the redeemed nor just from the redeemed. It is a duty of each man to all men.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Methodism and the Holy Spirit Today," an address to the World Methodist Convocation of Evangelism at Philadelphia, June 26-28, 1953. This address was published in *RELIGION IN LIFE*, Winter 1953-1954, and is also available from *Tidings*, General Board of Evangelism, Nashville, Tennessee.

<sup>17</sup> *Life*, October 1, 1956, "Billy Graham Makes Plea for an End to Intolerance."

F. Love is the duty of all men, but is it a possibility for all?

G. That, of course, depends upon what you mean by "possibility." If you mean a mere human possibility, the answer is no. The human mind cannot cope with the problems that we are wrestling with today. And when our intellectuals begin to admit that they don't know the answers, and that fact reaches the masses on the street, then they are going to turn somewhere. They will turn to all sorts of escapism. Some will turn to alcohol. Others will turn to religion.<sup>18</sup>

F. But doesn't the kind of religion you sometimes describe in your sermons offer more promise of escape in terms of "assurance of heaven" than positive challenge to cope with these social problems in the light and by the power of Christ?

G. Please spell that out more fully.

F. Many of those declaring decisions for Christ say that they are forsaking some trivial thing such as wearing lipstick without parental approval. They seem totally unaware of the social implications of any genuine "decision for Christ."

G. In the first place, I do not intend to preach nearly so much about specific sins as about the root disorder which produces all sin. The fact that some people feel guilty about trivial things simply means that they should forsake these things. It does not mean that they should not forsake more serious sins!

However, I don't even condemn women because they are prostitutes, or men because they are gangsters, any more than I condemn people who take drugs, *simply for their personal sins, wicked as they are*. These evils are the symptoms, not the cause of our moral weakness.<sup>19</sup>

F. Nevertheless, aren't you disturbed lest people who come to Christ in your Crusades do so too naively and precritically—with no expectation of growth to come?

G. Of course, but when my little boy began to talk, his first word was "Da-Da." How babyish! But it was music in my ears! Perhaps the new Christian's stutterings affect God the same way.

F. Probably our profoundest statements are nearly as babyish in comparison with the full truth of God! . . . Just so you are not watering down your message to make it more acceptable to the masses. Some truth hurts; some truth antagonizes. As long as truth is truth, the wisest speaker

<sup>18</sup> U. S. News & World Report, August 27, 1954.

<sup>19</sup> The National Police Gazette, "The Sins Billy Graham Doesn't Preach About," by Jim Hart, September, 1957.

cannot completely take the sting out of it; nor can use of the shrewdest psychological devices assure its acceptance. Only the Holy Spirit can make that possible. A preacher shows he trusts the Holy Spirit when he rests his case ultimately not on his techniques or personality but on the truth itself.

G. Yes! And I shall try to trust the Holy Spirit and to do my share of stressing proper social attitudes in my preaching. But remember, Dr. Ferré, that the race problem is not going to be solved just by preachments. It's going to have to be done by setting an example of love, *and especially by the power of the Holy Spirit in redeemed lives.*<sup>20</sup>

F. We need bold preaching, bold living, and bold educating! To use another example, which you yourself have embodied in your preaching, consider the Cold War. Evangelism today faces a black world, a world divided by a terrifying chasm. God wants to bridge this gulf for us. The modern evangelist must dare to find and to speak the full truth humbly about the Communist and the Capitalist world. He will weigh both sides on the scales of God—only on the scales of God—and not fall prey to human propaganda. Evangelism today must be prophetic. It must dare to believe and live the Gospel.

G. Since I regard Communism as unexplainable except in terms of its being masterminded by Satan,<sup>21</sup> I can't share your view on weighing both sides as though Communism might be partly in the right. However, I wholeheartedly agree that doors can be opened between East and West by man's prayer and by God's Spirit. During our Crusades I have seen gangsters, psychiatrists who had come to scoff, dishonest businessmen, and other seemingly hopeless people, changed by the power and love of God. Even Communists may yield to that power!

F. Even Christians may and should! . . . Billy, the time has come for me to leave, but first, in the light of our conversation and my thought on the subject, I would like to try to summarize our agreements: The whole Christ for the whole man, for the whole Church, for the whole world, for the whole Truth, is the joyous news and sobering task of evangelism. In ourselves we shall fail; in the Holy Spirit we cannot. . . .

G. *That is a great platform; to shrivel it in any way would be a mistake. An excellent statement.*

F. Thank you, Billy Graham, for a most stimulating conversation.

G. Good-by, Dr. Ferré. We must do this again sometime.

<sup>20</sup> *The New York Times Magazine*, "As Billy Graham Sees His Role," by Stanley Rowland, April 21, 1957, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> *U. S. News & World Report*, Interview, September 27, 1957, p. 78.

## 2. Billy Graham's Evangelism

CECIL NORTHCOTT

### I

HOW DOES BILLY GRAHAM look as a seasoned evangelistic campaigner? He has now stormed New York and London, but these two great cities still continue their life untroubled and impervious to the assaults which this kind of personal evangelism provides. But is that so? Is there not some residue of evangelism left behind, some modicum of effect to be felt within the life of the churches? It should be possible to draw up a balance sheet of debits and credits. It is perhaps a misguided undertaking because balance sheets in religion are no true guide to the condition of the spiritual life, and in Graham's case the impact of his personality plus the expert publicity methods employed offer an immense credit item, but also a liability. You want to hear him either in a critical frame of mind or in one of buoyant expectancy.

I have turned up my notes written toward the end of the London campaign five years ago—which was Graham's first attack on any of the world's vast concentrations of population.

"He started badly. But anyone bearing the label 'American evangelist' would. We thought of Aimée Semple Macpherson and the gush of Los Angeles. We thought of lush new sects from the land of two hundred denominations. We thought of religion flowing with dollars and coca-cola. We imagined vast, expensive gentlemen with crashing mid-west accents punching home the old gospel and threatening the miserable British with all the perils coming to them from Bikini and Hiroshima. Even the British section of the World's Evangelical Alliance which invited Graham had icy attacks of cold feet. Not only had they opened the door to this invader, but they had risked a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the process. They had leased a vast concrete barn of a stadium at Harringay in the bleakest part of North London. Only dog track gamblers and circus clowns went there. Fancy getting converted at Harringay. London was inclined to yawn cynically.

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"The cynics went up to Harringay and hoped to see the place half full. They were disappointed. For six nights a week for twelve weeks the vast barn has been crowded with 14,000 people a night, extra meetings on Saturdays, links by wire all round the country. A million people must have been to the Graham meetings and the reported conversions are 30,000. The Graham teamwork has been superb. The singing, the follow-up, the notes to parsons, the packaging of the Graham gospel and the delivery of it have style and precision. If ever method was allied to message then Graham in London is the 'triumphant ever.' The machine ticked, and all those who scream for using modern methods in evangelism have had their fill. The boys in the Graham team know their business. They're in evangelism. What's your line?

"The thousands who flocked to see and hear have been mainly 'the faithful' and they have been rewarded by a lift of the spirit, a religious thrill, and there is no doubt that honest-to-goodness Bible fundamentalism and evangelicalism has been given a magnificent testimonial. From now on we shall be told with all the accents of authority that this is the way to convert the 1950 generation. We have returned at last to the paths of grace from which the churches have strayed, and from which organized religion has wandered. The popular press has already joined in this chorus. One paper with a million and a half circulation in a long editorial says, 'Will anyone deny that that is precisely the message that our generation needs? If Mr. Graham can indeed re-kindle the faith that makes life worth living then it would be wrong to doubt either the sincerity or power of his mission just because he surrounds it with the trappings of modern propaganda. . . . Uncertainty is breeding aimlessness. It is hard in the cold caverns of fear to discover the sweetness that lies in the sun and stars and the wind on the heath.'

"Is Graham the wind on the heath for Christianity in Britain? Many have asked that question during these three months. Thousands have prayed that it might be so. No campaign has ever had such prolonged and persistent prayer, and no campaign has so assiduously cultivated the right relationships with the churches. But is the wind blowing? Yes, of course, it is, but the puffs of wind are light ones. There is no powerful, irresistible current blowing all before it. There is a lift in the sails but the ship idles on a comparatively windless ocean. Graham has been a welcome puff, but he is not to be mistaken for the wind itself."

I find that in rereading that judgment there is very little I want to change, and particularly this is true after contemplating Graham's New



York Crusade which was London over again but only more so. A closer view of the London Campaign was provided by the London paper *Evening Standard* in an investigation made in December, 1954, eight months after the campaign had finished, and although these figures have been criticized I still claim they provide a quick look at a number of average parishes in the London area where Graham might have been expected to have some permanent effect.

## CONVERSION RECORD OF TWENTY LONDON PARISHES

<i>Parish—with population</i>	<i>Came forward.</i>	<i>Old churchgoers.</i>	<i>Outsiders.</i>	<i>Outsiders still going.</i>
All Saints, Edgware, 35,000 . . . . .	14	12	2	2
St. Gabriel and All Saints, Pimlico, 30,000 . . . . .	6	4	2	0
Christ Church, Clapham, 25,000 . . . . .	0	0	0	0
St. Michael, Willesden, 25,000 . . . . .	17	12	5	3
St. James, Enfield, 24,000 . . . . .	18	14	4	0
St. Giles, Clerkenwell, 23,000 . . . . .	12	4	8	0
John Keble Church, Mill Hill, 20,000 . . . . .	12	4	8	0
St. Mary's Battersea, 20,000 . . . . .	2	1	1	0
All Saints and St. Luke's, Harlesden, 20,000 . . . . .	14	7	7	7
St. Andrew, Fulham, 20,000 . . . . .	8	4	4	1
St. James, Muswell Hill, 20,000 . . . . .	38	23	15	10
St. Mary and Christ Church, Wimbledon, 20,000 . . . . .	68	64	4	2
Holy Trinity, East Finchley, 20,000 . . . . .	14	5	9	0
St. Mary and St. Augustine, Hackney, 18,000 . . . . .	12	6	6	0
St. John, Dulwich, 18,000 . . . . .	6	0	6	2
St. Matthew, W. Kensington, 17,500 . . . . .	1	1	0	0
St. Clements, East Dulwich, 17,000 . . . . .	17	16	1	0
St. Michael, Wood Green, 16,716 . . . . .	30	15	15	6
Emmanuel, W. Hampstead, 16,000 . . . . .	41	28	13	2
St. Paul, Hammersmith, 15,000 . . . . .	6	6	0	0
TOTALS: Pop. 420,216 . . . . .	336	226	110	35

Since there were 36,000 converts from this campaign—the investigator claims—he is entitled to assume that 24,000 of them were "old faithfuls," and of the other 12,000 fewer than 4,000 are still in the churches.

## II

Dr. Stanley High of *Reader's Digest* has, in a most friendly way, challenged these figures. He claims they do not represent a true picture, let alone a vital picture of what Graham did. I am inclined to agree with him because figures represent little in religion; but as figures do represent something we must take notice of them. Similar figures are, I believe, available following the New York Campaign. While these figures have been challenged as to their meaning they have not been challenged on their accuracy, and to quote C. P. Scott's famous dictum, "Facts are sacred, comment is free." Does Graham "break through" to the unchurched, the nonreligious, the immense amoral "tele-mass" groups who never read beyond the headlines of the tabloids? The answer by and large is "no." But a "no" with qualifications. For the weeks that he was operating in London, Graham put religion into the news columns. He made people talk religion on the streets, in the clubs and pubs, on the transport system. His "mass assault" had the effect of softening up the crusty overlay under which the British keep their personal emotions and beliefs. Religion rose out of the respectable and nondiscussible grooves into debatable areas where people could disagree—and take sides for and against Graham.

That in itself is an achievement, and it is a permanent achievement from which the Christian faith in Britain is still benefiting. Take, for instance, the flow of candidates to the ministry. All denominations report that many of the young men now coming forward owe some of their decision to the Graham impact. What made many of them decide for the ministry was either a Graham meeting or the relayed power of the movement generated by the evangelist. Whether it is good for the Christian ministry to be led by young ministers bearing the recognizable stamp of the "gospel according to Graham" is a matter for debate; I am merely reporting a fact.

Another fact to be noted is the rising tempo of a powerful evangelical drive developing independently of the churches. This evangelism bears the expected marks of Bible faithfulness, a certain unctuous piety, and an aggressive panache for personal salvation. This movement tends to bypass the denominations and even suggests that "those who are not with us" are not red-hot for the Christian religion, and are not concerned about winning souls. Graham himself kept free from this strident, critical note and was always appreciative of the day-long, night-long battle waged by the churches against the world, the flesh and the devil.

Another effect of the Graham impact in Britain is the subtle suggestion



that this method of personality evangelism is the only method fit to practice in the modern world. Consequently, a number of lesser Grahams are entering the field of personal evangelism supported by the light of publicity which throws into a grey shadow the more prosaic life of the churches.

In the world of students in colleges and universities, the Graham impact has given power and prestige to the more conservative groups. It is said that science students, in particular, accept the "word from Graham" as the one which points to the final authority of the Bible, the inerrancy of Scripture, and the infallible court of judgment which is available to man in the printed word of God.

One of the organizations to report a startling rise in membership following the Graham Campaign is the Scripture Union, which is a system of daily Bible reading. In the two years of 1954 and 1955 membership leaped up to 120,000. This has brought in its train an impressive offering of life service for the ministry and the mission field which began under the influence of the Graham Mission. It is said that twenty-two out of the thirty-two men ordained in the diocese of London in September, 1957, were evangelicals owing much of their religious faith and allegiance to the type of church which supported the Graham Crusade.

A remarkable phenomenon of central London churches at the moment is the strength of the churches which have an evangelical tradition, such as All Souls, Langham Place, Westminster Chapel, and St. Paul's, Portman Square. Such men as Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones and the Rev. John R. Stott draw large and regular crowds of worshipers who come prepared to study their open Bibles and to listen to closely argued addresses on Scriptural themes. This church tradition was strengthened by the Graham impact. Another effect is seen in the various "business house groups" which meet within the large business organizations in London for weekly prayer and discussion. These groups are now mainly peopled by those who are in the Graham tradition but keep their loyalty to their traditional churches.

Within the Church of England there are strong critics of the Graham method and the revival of fundamentalism to which it appears to have led. These critics include the Archbishop of York, who fears that an unenlightened return to Bible fundamentalism will be a retrograde step in English religious life, which not only needs "personal holiness" and guidance from the Bible but also a concern for the Christian faith as faith for the whole of life. Graham said little about life as it is lived by millions in this country who are caught in the vast web of industrialized life where

personal values are often lightly held and the worth of individual men is frequently at a discount.

It is no criticism of Graham to note that as an evangelist he is not living in the twentieth century. His techniques are certainly contemporary and his organization knows all the tricks of the advertiser's trade. But his research methods have evidently not led him to see modern man as the prisoner of his own created world from which he cannot leap at a single bound.

The twentieth century in Britain still awaits its evangelist. Perhaps it will never get him, because the task of this world's redemption lies with the total body of Christ through the travail of its corporate life. New methods of giving that life increased power and vigor are needed, and Graham and his allies are among them. But it must not be presumed that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them only.

Evangelism in the modern world must probe much deeper than the swift, immensely personal method of a revived traditional approach. It must speak to the entangled situations of life and conduct in which men are involved, whatever their overnight "decision for Christ" may be. The methods of personal evangelism, rewarding and dramatic as they often appear to be, are no substitute for the long and painful evangelism of our common life in industry, trade unions, employer groups and economic organizations. The Christian Church is prone to sail off on the elated tide of evangelistic campaigns and neglect the far tougher jobs of evangelizing the pagan ways that even converted Christians are involved in.

"Evangelism in depth" is a cry heard at every conference dealing with the world mission of the Church. That means not only claiming a personal dedication from individuals but also a dedication from their community, family and industrial relationships. Begin with the individual? Yes. But don't end there. The Bible is worthy of a far deeper response than merely my own personal, emotional response. The Church is more than an organization looking for a few additional recruits from an evangelistic campaign. It is the very Body of Christ engaged in the unending warfare of her Crucified and Risen Lord. Billy Graham himself, I believe, would subscribe to all this. But does the vast movement of personal evangelism and personal evangelizers he has let loose see it this way? The London newspaper *Observer* summed up Graham in this way: "Undoubtedly Dr. Graham has revived religious faith in many where it had languished, and has met the need of many for some immediate stimulus to help them cope with their

everyday lives. It is less sure that he has helped to bring religion to grips with the actual problems that face modern man."

### III

Billy Graham is credited with a desire to come back to Britain before long. I hope he will. He wants to go to one of the industrial areas of Britain in the Midlands or the North—a desire which is to be encouraged but yet to be looked on with rather fearful expectancy. These are precisely the areas where the Church is weakest, where it is most out of touch with the industrialized populations, and where it is just beginning the long process of reaching out to the masses of workers it has never reached in all its history. Will Graham help? There are those who would hold up both hands in favor of his coming, but many shrewd observers are downcast. "Revivalism" in industrial areas of Britain has tended to isolate the "good" people and failed to bring religion into the life of the great industries of steel, iron, metal and coal.

In his remarkable book *Church and People in an Industrial City*, recently published,<sup>1</sup> Canon Ted Wickham of Sheffield pleads for a new "missionary structure" of the Church in industrial areas which cannot be accomplished by spasmodic campaigns.

There is [says Wickham] a huge intellectual task requiring the disciplined co-operation of the best minds of the Church and indeed of many who may be outside it; the co-operation of theologians who understand the secular problems, laymen with their appropriate expert and technical knowledge who live with the problems, "lay-theologians," men of wisdom and good counsel who know the social temperature and have a finger on the social pulse. A Church seeking to help her own members, let alone a Church seeking engagement and dialogue with the world, would require more effective machinery for thinking, good minds corporately focused on the hardest issues of our time, some planned use of brains at the service of the Christian mission in the contemporary world. Tawney's devastating word that the Church has ceased to count because it has ceased to think is not without point. Its implications would be even more urgent if the Church were more closely geared into this problem-beset world.

Graham might be useful as a crusading spearhead for this new "missionary movement" in an industrial area—a dedicated "gimmick" who would bulldoze into the apathy and derision of a secular society. But he would need at the same time to be geared in with a total plan of a "mission" in which personal response was linked to community and industrial and group response. In his analysis of Britain's religious situation in the industrial

<sup>1</sup> Lutterworth Press, 1958, 30s.

areas Wickham sees the "early Methodist class-meeting" as a prototype of what is needed today.

Thus there is the need [he says] for smaller, warmer, more community-minded expressions of the Christian community than attendance at public worship alone can provide; and in a secular society the image of the Gospel and of the Church is grievously distorted both to those within and to those without, when the Body of Christ is reduced, seemingly, to "going to church." This is now in fact widely realized in the Church, and much has been done to make the assembling of the Church, whether for worship or for deliberation, a real community of people sharing a rich common life; though it is often only secured because the smallness of numbers permits it, and, as we have already noted, the community created all too often defines the inner life of the Church rather than the shape of a missionary instrument bearing on the parish. There is no certain evidence that the class-meetings as such were the very spear-head and cutting-edge in Methodist expansion, but undoubtedly the "militants" were made there and the new members were held within them. Certainly too they provide a structure through which a close pastoral care was exercised even where the ministry was remote and itinerant—a structure moreover that could be manned by intelligent laymen.

When Graham comes again to Britain I would like to see him allied to an "industrial mission" which has the confidence already of workers, management and trade unions and where his "personality methods" could be geared to community and group life. That would indeed be a powerful alliance and might speak in a new way to a Britain which—in the industrial areas—has become almost totally secular and nationalistic.

This raises important points of strategy for the Church in its approach to the masses of workers in any country where they are depersonalized and where the industrial milieu in which they live has never had a Christian heart.

*First.* It must be realized that the Church is not revived merely by planning to be revived, and the test of evangelism cannot always be whether the churches are filled by any particular method. In a land like Britain where we are living on inherited spiritual capital it may well be that the churches, as institutions, have to be more empty than they are before they are refilled. In other words the Graham methods are useful if they are used as a "break-through" instrument—even to start people talking and to get them to do some more listening and thinking.

*Second.* The Graham methods are so frequently criticized as the "inside" talking to the "outside" whereas the Christian evangel must work from "within the outside." In other words, the slower, less spectacular technique of the cell or group or lone witness is to be recognized as a valid method. This is the heart of the Wickham method in the steel industry

in the steel city of Sheffield. He has trained, over the last ten years, a team of some three hundred men within the industry who are able to talk industry's language and who knows what it is to be Christian within the world of steel. That means a certain capacity for learning that discussions about wages, profits and industrial management are Christian discussions and have their own theological insights and discoveries. So much of the Graham technique is authoritative, harsh and final. No doubt every man is a sinner and repentance is the beginning of wisdom, but every man is also a learner in a new world of wonder. The "industrial mission" method has essentially to be humble in its approach to the vast inventions of the human mind which have resulted in modern industrial organization. Evangelism is not only a business of "telling them" but of "learning from them."

*Third.* The Graham method which leads people to believe that their being Christian is a private religious decision needs balancing with the belief that it is also a community and public affair. To decide for Christ is one thing but not only one thing. It means many things. It must affect life, neighbors, work and home. Christianity is a related religion and not an isolated one. Graham tends to isolate. Wickham tends to incorporate. There I think is the difference between the two evangelism approaches. They need one another.

When Graham comes again to Britain and if he comes this time to an industrial area, I hope that his methods will be carefully revised and wisely allied to the new "industrial mission" techniques which are now being slowly and most painfully learned in Britain. To bulldoze in with the *expertise* and know-how of modern advertising may seem to be astonishingly brisk and efficient, but we are learning in Britain that evangelism is not permanently accomplished by quick overnight methods. There is no lightning detergent to be offered to the heaviest of sinners for his cleansing. Decision is but the beginning of conversion. If this is true personally how much more true is it of industrial and community life. None of us lives to himself—and none of us is ever converted to himself. Let Billy Graham come again, but let him also have Ted Wickham as a comrade.

### 3. The Theological Presuppositions of Billy Graham

ROBERT O. FERM

#### I

AS A DIRECT RESULT of the mammoth crusades conducted by Dr. Billy Graham, there has been continuing evidence of a certain psychological phenomenon that has stimulated a renewed interest in the study of the psychology of conversion. Along with this renewed interest in the study of the phenomenon of conversion has been an inquiry into the particular theology of the evangelist. These two factors cannot be separated. It is well known that there is a direct relationship between the particular theology so essential to his preaching and the particular type of religious conversion.

As might be expected, numerous attempts have been made to explain both the theology and the resulting psychological manifestations. It is essential for us to observe at the outset that this vast evangelistic movement cannot be accounted for on the basis of any particular cultural background, nor can it be explained on the basis of the mood and tempo of our times. The spirited preaching of the evangelist has brought about conversion of men and women of every category of age and ethnic group. Nor is there a certain personality type making up the preponderance of the converts. On the contrary, any careful observer will notice that all of the essential elements of conversion are present in spite of the varieties of personality and cultural background.

In order to discover precisely what has taken place in the lives of such heterogeneous persons responding to the "invitation," men and women in many countries, at home and abroad, have been interviewed. Quite significantly, the response to the evangelistic message has been the same in the Orient, in India, in northern European countries, as in America. Meetings that have been held both north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line have had similar results in spite of the well-known fact that there are differing

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attitudes toward theology and toward church attendance in these two parts of this nation.

Such convincing evidences are repeatedly offered to satisfy the inquiry of those who have manifested an interest in this remarkable spiritual movement. The findings are especially valuable and informative to those who are engaged in any form of religious leadership. It might be said that any informed minister would be obliged to inquire into this religious movement and its effects.

It should first of all be observed that Billy Graham is currently preaching a gospel containing no unique elements nor any newly-developed teachings. Even his sharpest critics have observed that the content of his message is one that belongs to an earlier generation, or generations, in spite of the fact that his method is strictly one that is appropriate to the space age. His message is one that is very obviously a Biblically-oriented message. It is not a technique of manipulating the Scriptures or discovering within the text of the Scriptures portions that express certain self-evident truths. On the contrary, it has been repeatedly affirmed by the evangelist and is apparent to his associates that his sole object is to confront his audiences with the Biblical message.

By way of anticipating a matter to be enlarged upon, it might be said that Billy Graham has only one theological presupposition. That presupposition is that there is a self-revealing God. Contingent upon the presupposition are several significant deductions. One is that the Bible is God's self-revelation to man, and as such it is authoritative and final for all matters of faith and practice. Even the most casual listener will be convinced that every affirmation contained in the sermons preached by the evangelist is a straight-line deduction from the Scriptures.

Having then this single presupposition, the evangelist proceeds in the proclamation of a message that is not only apostolic, but one that has had its proclaimers in every generation since it was originally declared by those who were witnesses of the resurrection of Christ.

Some have insisted that his analysis as well as his solution manifests a certain oversimplification, as if they had not read the affirmation of Paul who said that God "in his wisdom chose to save all who would believe by the 'simplemindedness' of the Gospel message."<sup>1</sup> These may have overlooked the supernatural character of the Gospel, or more likely have not

<sup>1</sup> Phillips, J. B., *The New Testament in Modern English*. The Macmillan Company, 1958, p. 351 (1 Cor. 1:21).

distinguished between *kerygma* and *didache*. Concerning this distinction, Dr. C. H. Dodd has said:

The New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching. Teaching, or the *didaskein*, is in a large majority of cases ethical instruction and the building up of the most holy faith. It may include apologetics or the exposition of theological doctrine. Preaching, on the other hand, is the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world. [And he adds:] While the church was concerned to hand on the teaching of the Lord, it was not by this that it made converts. It was by *kerygma*, says Paul, not by *didache*, that it pleased God to save men.<sup>2</sup>

It is *kerygma* that Billy Graham has chosen to proclaim; and this fact absolves him from the fault of oversimplification. His is a specialized activity.

This activity of the evangelist has been well delineated by Dr. W. E. Sangster as follows:

It is not Christian education, or the deepening of the spiritual life, or the quest of sanctification, or the outworking of the Christian ethic in the social order, though it will relate to all of these. It is the sheer work of the herald who goes in the name of the King to the people, who either openly or by indifference deny their allegiance to their rightful Lord. He blows the trumpet and demands to be heard. He tells the people in plain words the melting clemency of their offended King and the things that belong to their peace. . . . He must convince heedless men living, some of them, an animal life, drugging their consciences and believing a lie, that for all their talk of life, they never had it; that in the profoundest sense possible to human beings they have never been born.<sup>3</sup>

## II

Those who accept the single presupposition of the self-revealing God, as does Billy Graham, and the accompanying view of the authoritative Scriptures, are aware of the fact that the Scriptures affirm that the basic cause of man's predicament is the fact of sin, even though the manifestations of this perplexity are exceedingly complex. It is from this complex practical situation that man needs deliverance. Even those who have taken exception to either the message or the method of Billy Graham have not been able to deny the lasting effectiveness of his evangelism. Transformed lives bear witness to the power of the message, though the evangelist would be the last one to say that his message is therefore true in the subjective sense. He would insist upon its objective factualness prior to any observed results.

Man's problems are primarily personal. Attention is called to the

<sup>2</sup> Dodd, C. H., *Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, Cambridge University Press, 1935, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Sangster, W. E., *Let Me Commend*, The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948, p. 14.



fact that the evangelist employs diagnosis as well as prognosis in his evangelistic approach to current human problems. His grasp of the global as well as the individual predicament is evident in almost every proclamation, and he interprets man's problem in the light of the total situation. His diagnosis then is comparatively simple. Man is a sinner. As such, he is beset by a multiplicity of problems, all of which are either directly or indirectly related to his depravity. It is from this complex practical situation that man seeks deliverance, for he has learned that he is impotent and incapable of self-rescue.

Having reduced man's essential problem to that of sin, Billy Graham then proceeds to make his prognosis. Here the positive promise is made of deliverance that is supernatural in its character. It is not a method of self-help or self-improvement. On the contrary, it is an understanding of, and a reliance upon, the power of God to transform a life. This power, he is convinced, is released through the proclamation of the gospel message, for he is in possession of no device capable of moral and spiritual renewal unless it is in the message itself.

It is precisely at this area that the evangelist believes there is no room for speculation. Here, one must speak authoritatively. The reason is that sin has not only corrupted and debased man's moral nature, but it has also seriously impaired and distorted his intellectual powers. Left to his own, man will grope about in ever-increasing confusion. To man in this confused state, an authoritative word must be spoken—and this word is the word of the gospel.

Attention must be called to the fact that the gospel as proclaimed by Billy Graham is a straight-line deduction from the words of the Scriptures. It is true, though not obvious, that he depends upon the original text rather than upon any translation. It rests not upon a solitary event in history, but is, in fact, interwoven with the very scheme of history by means of prophetic declarations, reaching its apex in the resurrection of Christ. The proclamation, therefore, is far more than a mere affirmation of isolated historical events of a peculiarly religious nature. It is the relating of these events of history to the providence of God and to the human predicament. Its proclamation, when related to both the grace of God and the human predicament, releases this spiritual power, which power Billy Graham himself recognizes as the operation of the Holy Spirit, capable of revolutionizing the entire human personality.

Having made this assertion, we point out the element of prognosis mentioned earlier. Billy Graham repeatedly makes the claim that the

entire personality can be instantly transformed by the exercise of personal faith in the supernatural message. All criticism to the contrary notwithstanding, there is abundant evidence that precisely this transformation has been and is taking place in the lives of multiplied thousands. To the one who observes this revolution in personality, the evidence is overwhelming. To explain either the message or the method in human categories is destined to end in utter failure. Sooner or later, one is confronted with a manifestation that bears all the marks of the supernatural. It is possible for the psychologist and for the sociologist to record certain observable effects which result from the preaching of Billy Graham. Such effects, however, are not peculiar to the persons making decisive commitments in the Billy Graham meetings. They can also be observed in those who make like decisions in meetings conducted by other evangelists who proclaim the same gospel.

Surveys have been conducted in order to determine the long-range effectiveness of this particular method of evangelism and to determine the relationship between the remarkable psychological phenomenon resulting from the preaching and the content of the message which is preached. Inquiry has also been made into the permanence of decisions made in these campaigns. As a result certain very significant conclusions have been reached. These conclusions are based upon more than four thousand personal interviews and another four thousand written questionnaires, conducted by the writer in co-operation with several workers, affiliated with regular churches and missions.

The total number of recorded decisions based upon Billy Graham Crusade reports include both first-time decisions to receive Christ and those for rededication or a call to service. Of the number of converts who indicated that theirs were first-time decisions, more than ninety-five per cent of them related their conversion experience to a particular Biblical doctrine or to a verse of Scripture which expresses the doctrine. Significantly, they recalled that their conversion was related to the Biblical doctrine of atonement in Christ, and the most frequently mentioned verse of Scripture was John 3:16. It is reasonable to conclude that the particular type of conversion taking place in the Billy Graham Crusades and as a direct result of his preaching are directly related to the theological content of his preaching.

The almost unvarying sequence of cause and effect is most convincing. Although his unparalleled effectiveness in evangelism has distinguished the evangelist among other evangelists who are declaring the same message, yet the observations and conclusions that would be derived from a study

of the message and the results of other evangelists would be the same. In fact, the resulting conversion is that particular manifestation that is anticipated among evangelicals.

Complete objectivity is not possible when it comes to investigating either the message or the effectiveness of Billy Graham. The Apostle Paul once declared that "... the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is both the power and wisdom of God." This affirmation is no less true today than when it was first written. Pure objectivity can see no more than the external manifestations. It is therefore, highly improbable that an objective observer is able to relate the Biblical message as proclaimed by the evangelist to the specific psychological phenomenon resulting with a high degree of accuracy.

### III

Returning, then, to the theological presuppositions of the evangelist, it is axiomatic that any effect must have at least an adequate cause. If the effects of the crusade were based on nothing more than the persuasiveness of the evangelist, they would be merely fleeting manifestations of the emotional reactions of persons who had otherwise been unable to achieve perfect integration. Such mass movements would be superficial and temporary at best. However, it has been observed that well over eighty per cent of those recording some kind of decision have adhered to that decision since the day that it was recorded. When 2,300 converts were interviewed nine months after the New York Crusade and twelve months after some of them had indicated their decisions, more than ninety per cent of them declared that they adhered to their original decision. Ministers in numerous cities expressed the persuasion that well over seventy per cent of the conversions were genuine and lasting. In each city where crusades have been conducted, there are multitudes who give evidence of religious and spiritual transformation directly due to the impact of the crusades. Mr. Paul Little, International Student Secretary of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, has observed, "I am more and more convinced that there were hundreds, if not thousands of people who really became Christians, about whom we have no record, statistically."

In the winter and spring of 1956, Billy Graham made a world tour, conducting crusades throughout the Orient and in India. Thirty months after this crusade, a survey was conducted by the writer in order to evaluate its true impact. According to the testimony of those who had indicated

some decision at that time by signing a decision card, the vast majority still maintain a vivid witness to that conversion experience. Beyond studies made in various cities in America, a sampling of the convert record was made in Honolulu, Tokyo, Taipei, Manila, Hong Kong, Calcutta, New Delhi and Madras. Some of those who recorded decisions had been previously exposed to some Christian teaching. This was due to the efforts of Christian missionaries and laymen. A large percentage had received no previous Christian instruction. Those who had received some previous instruction experienced a clear and definite decision at the time of the preaching of the evangelist. Those who had received no previous Christian teaching, but were of another and pagan religious faith, or even infidel, recalled that the full meaning of the experience was not clarified until several days had elapsed after the decision had been made, but it was no less vivid or less permanent. In most instances, the change was far more revolutionary than the change taking place in those who had experienced some previous Christian training, however superficial that training might have been.

It has been previously stated that the message of Billy Graham is neither novel nor unique. All of his preaching is designed to secure an immediate and unconditional commitment to Jesus Christ. Those who are unfamiliar with evangelism and conversion are frequently skeptical as to the genuineness and permanence of such conversions. Although the message is not wanting in either doctrinal or ethical aspects, yet its primary aim is not to instruct and edify those who are believers, but to convert. And though conversion of those outside the church is the declared objective, many Christians renew their former vows and make new commitments. His effectiveness in bringing heterogeneous multitudes to the point of decision cannot be denied; neither can the reality and permanence of instantaneous conversions be denied, for they are occurring with surprising regularity.

However, instantaneous conversions cannot be produced simply because the speaker seeks to produce such conversions. Neither can it be demonstrated that such conversions as those occurring in crusades are the result of mass hysteria or suggestion. On the contrary, the converts usually lost their awareness of a crowd as they were confronted with their personal guilt before God and of his proffered mercy. It appears evident therefore, that there is a direct relationship between the message preached and the resulting type of conversion.

The message preached by the evangelist is none other than the first-

century gospel. It is a message that confronts man with his sin and his sinfulness as well as with God's remedy for sin. The message sets forth the person and work of Christ in which he is clearly set forth as a unique personality. This Christological view is expressed by the Apostle Paul in the words, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

The uniqueness of the person of Christ for Billy Graham is straight-line deduction from the teaching of the Scriptures. Unique in his conception, sinless in his life, and atoning in his death, Christ is declared as the answer to man's basic problem . . . namely the problem of sin. Man's proper reaction to the atoning work of Christ is summed up simply in the words "repentance" and "faith." For this reason more than any other, Billy is sometimes accused of oversimplification.

Although both words have a distinctively theological flavor in the preaching of the evangelist, there can be no doubt about the fact that they are clearly understood by a solid majority of his listeners. According to the report of those who have experienced conversion in any one of the Billy Graham meetings, they all had a clear understanding of the meaning of repentance as well as the meaning of faith. The clarity with which they grasped theological meanings is one of the most significant observations made as a result of many interviews with persons who made lasting religious decisions in the Billy Graham meetings. The consistency of their reaction to the preaching displays very convincingly the self-authenticating character of the Scriptures. Although these people, commonly referred to as converts, are completely convinced of the authority and finality of the Scriptures in man's salvation, Billy Graham makes no noticeable attempt to convince them of that fact, beyond his simple assumption of their authority. Such persuasion gives every evidence of being accomplished by a power beyond and above the evangelist himself.

Both the evangelist and those who understand his message and techniques attribute this remarkable phenomenon to the confirming influence of the Holy Spirit. Preaching, as he does, comparatively few messages on the Holy Spirit, he leaves no doubt in the mind of his audience as to his confidence in the Spirit's operation.

#### IV

A final word should be said with reference to the psychological implications of his preachings. Due recognition is given to the separate elements of personality. That man is possessed of intellect, sensibility and will is assumed. All preaching is directed to one or all of these elements with

varying emphasis. It might be supposed that the evangelist is inclined to direct his message toward the emotional area of man's psychological being, but Billy Graham does not do so. This is not to say that emotions are ignored, but it is to say that they are not played upon while ignoring the other elements.

If Billy Graham were to make an analysis of his plan and direction in preaching, he would arrange his message and his emphasis as follows. First the word is directed toward the intellect, for Christianity must first be understood. Man is incapable of accepting by faith that which he cannot grasp with the intellect. The message must first gain acceptance by man's intellect. Second, the will must be brought into submission to the claims of the gospel upon the individual. Hence the appeal goes beyond mere intellectual acceptance and calls for deliberate decision. The almost total absence of emphasis upon man's emotional nature is deliberate and studied on the part of Billy Graham, lest the entire work of evangelism degenerate to emotionalism. To be sure, emotions are present, but the not infrequent tear shed by the penitent sinner is still a suppressed one.

If there are conclusions to be reached, and there must be, the most significant of them would be that man is psychologically designed to receive the gospel in the wholeness of his being. This fact is basic in the entire ministry of Billy Graham. Recognizing the intellectual character of man, he stresses the content of the gospel message, presenting the basic historical material of the gospel in language that is both relevant and convincing. Though couched in terms appropriate to the twentieth-century man, he conveys the first-century message with conviction and power. Man, grasping the full significance of the gospel with its relevance to the human predicament, makes the decision. Once made, the decision is one of transforming significance, for by an act of his will, the convert appropriates the full advantage of the gospel, and synchronously repudiates the life of self that had been condemned by the law.

In relating the experience of conversion, either in unsolicited letter or prepared questionnaire, the familiar effect in the converted person is that of an abiding spiritual satisfaction. What actually results is a fully integrated personality that has finally made an adjustment to the contemporary situation. They have passed beyond frustration and anxiety into a calm and settled assurance. If one asks concerning those who lack such transformation of character and personality, the answer lies in the spurious character of conversion that sometimes occurs, though in a surprisingly low percentage of the total.



To what can such a remarkable phenomenon be attributed, if not to the personality of the speaker or the efficiency of the organization? Giving full recognition to every phase of crusade planning and execution, there still remains the remarkable change that takes place in the lives of those who are savingly convinced of the truth of the gospel. Lacking any natural explanation, one is compelled to acknowledge the intervention of God by the Spirit. Thus the Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit, anointing the messenger and persuading the hearer, is displayed. Once this doctrine is accepted as a working hypothesis, the spectacular effectiveness of preaching becomes understandable. Aside from the working of the Holy Spirit there is no adequate explanation, nor is it possible to describe or explain that which is taking place in terms devoid of spiritual implications.

Billy Graham regards himself as merely the bearer of a message of incomparable worth. Though viewed by some as oversimplification, it is actually a reduction of the total message of the Bible to the truths essential for man's immediate appropriation in order to the realization of eternal life. It is the summary message of what God has done for man. God has spoken and acted, and Graham believes this record without reservation. Believing it, he proceeds to proclaim it in all of its splendor with the complete confidence that his message is capable of accomplishing immediate results. Thus far, every attempt has confirmed his expectation.



# The Range of Contemporary Beliefs in God

JAMES E. SELLERS

## I

CLERGYMEN IN THE SOUTH were besieged a few years ago with hot, crowded little pamphlets slashing at a distinguished theologian resident in their region. Nels F. S. Ferré, then teaching at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, had just brought out his book, *The Christian Understanding of God*.<sup>1</sup> One thumbnail brochure, smudgy both in looks and content, declared of it: "Never in 1900 years, since the days of the vile blasphemies of Celsus, Porphyry, and Lucian against the early church, has such a vicious attack been launched against God's Holy Word the Bible, and the Person of Jesus Christ, His Lovely Son."<sup>2</sup>

Shortly afterward, trustees of the Methodist regional assembly at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, canceled a lecture series that Ferré had been scheduled to deliver there.<sup>3</sup> "I would like to commend the trustees of the Methodist Church for canceling Ferré's lectures," responded one Fannie B. McCoy in a letter to the Asheville, North Carolina, *Citizen-Times*. "He plainly denies the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . Ferré believes in a wide range of thought, new ideas, contrary to sound faith in the Gospel." To many conservative church members, particularly those who did not take the trouble to read the new book for themselves, Ferré's views on God almost seemed atheistic.

At almost the same time, however, Dr. Ferré was beleaguered from the other side by naturalists, philosophers, and sophisticated Christians. The trouble with Ferré's thought, this camp decided, was that it was far too old-fashioned and orthodox. A reviewer for *The Christian Century* con-

<sup>1</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Issued by David Otis Fuller, Grand Rapids, Michigan (n.d.)

<sup>3</sup> *Nashville Tennessean*, August 4, 1955, p. 6.

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demned the book for setting aside great space "simply to pay respect to certain traditional concepts."<sup>4</sup> *The London Times Literary Supplement* commented: "He demands so full a positive conceptual understanding of the divine being as to become highly anthropomorphic."<sup>5</sup> In like vein, Ferré has often been criticized by fellow theologians and philosophers for his "supernaturalism," the implication being that no grown-up modern really thinks of God in so literal and primitive a way.

Doubtless, Dr. Ferré himself is partly responsible for this double misunderstanding of his view of God. His writings, often insistent and unqualified when he is attempting to revitalize an old belief, lend themselves to the kind of lifting out of context which fundamentalists have practiced shamelessly against him. His philosophy, based on Alfred North Whitehead's and up-to-date enough, is often phrased in evangelical language that sophisticated readers take for obscurantism.

None of these reasons, however, is good enough to answer the question: why does the same view of God appear to be atheism from one perspective—and orthodox,<sup>1</sup> even passé, supernaturalism from another? The answer is that belief in God is not a yes-or-no proposition. To those whose creed is simply "no," any kind of theistic commitment, however reasoned, will seem obsolete. To those who think that all there is to it is to insist loudly that God reigns, believe it or be damned, any kind of appeal to intelligent sentiments will seem atheistic. The theology of Nels Ferré, because it is one of those lying somewhere in between (and because it has been under fire from both ends) happens to be a good example. The same point can be as well made positively: Ferré is probably the only major theologian alive who could be invited to address religious groups as far apart on their God-beliefs as the Nazarenes and the Unitarians.

## II

Figuratively speaking, prevailing beliefs about God can be strung out in a circle; better yet, around the dial of a needle gauge. Thirty-five years ago, in the roaring Twenties, the needle sometimes seemed to point down at the left—toward zero. F. Scott Fitzgerald was to define sin for that generation, and to many of its members, the only intelligent belief about God was that he didn't exist. Lately (since World War II in this country) this position has included thinkers who deny God's existence in a far more telling manner than did the Fitzgeralds and the H. L. Menckens.

<sup>4</sup> August 6, 1952, p. 889.

<sup>5</sup> August 22, 1952, p. 553.

The 1930's brought depression, and the 1940's war, and new interpreters of sin came forward to replace the irreverent spokesmen of the Twenties. Reinhold Niebuhr is perhaps best known of this later generation. In this period, the needle moved a great distance around the circle; a mark of civilized man was now the admission that God might hold the answer to questions men had been failing to answer on their own. In this mood, the new extremist also found his opportunity, and the needle showed it could spin rightward violently enough to go clear off the dial. For a new chance came to religious ultraconservatives; they proclaimed God's existence so hallowed and other-worldly, they succeeded in shutting him off entirely from the practical activities of men.

Today, the range of functioning beliefs about God covers at least seven well-defined positions on this circle. Starting at the zero mark and working all the way around the dial, the positions flow into each other smoothly, but not so smoothly that clear-cut examples of each are unavailable:

1. *Replacement of God by Nothingness.* As a philosopher, the French novelist Jean-Paul Sartre probably has very few conscious followers in America. As a prophet of the vacancy and meaninglessness of life, he has many—some of whom never heard of him. It takes courage to be what Sartre calls an "existentialist." He means, roughly speaking, someone who knows that he has only himself to depend on—he can rely neither on others nor on God.

Curiously, Sartre does not define his point of view as atheism; it is beyond that. An atheist is someone who might go to great lengths to prove that God does not exist. Sartre declares instead: "Even if God existed, our view is that it would change nothing. Not that we may believe God does exist; but we think that the real problem is not the one of his existence; man must find himself again and be persuaded that nothing can save him from himself, not even a worthwhile proof of God's existence."<sup>6</sup>

This is what Sartre goes on to describe as man's situation of abandonment. Granting that there were a God, or even a general system of morals or laws in the universe, "it is I in any case who decide the meaning that they have."<sup>7</sup> No one can come to the rescue of the deciding I, for at every point, the I must decide what to make of the proffered help. To those who declare that this vista of Godless existence is sheer despair, Sartre replies: on the contrary, it is a stance of optimism. Those who *really* despair, he holds, are those who cannot depend on themselves—those who vainly look

<sup>6</sup> Sartre, J. P., *L'Existentialisme Est Un Humanisme*. Paris: Editions Nagel, 1946, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

to the heavens for the existence they are unable to assert for themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Even though America has few who follow Sartre at the philosophic level, millions actually live in his world of nothingness. The fact that many of them imagine they have a God does not change the outlook at all, for the idea of God in modern times has perhaps contributed to the loss of meaning. Another existentialist, the German philosopher Karl Jaspers, does not go nearly as far as Sartre in denying God's existence. Yet he makes the pointed comment that one of the great sources of defeatism in the Western world is its modern God-idea. Out of the Reformation came a magnified exaltation of God as creator—which meant that men began to think of themselves more specifically than ever as creatures. As the march of science, with its promotion of doubt and skepticism, laid confidence in a mechanical world system, it also “made an end of God the Creator.”<sup>9</sup> Creatures without a Creator, in a world emptied of spirit, could conclude only that existence has no purpose. On this view, creatures peopling a purposeless world are devotees of nothingness even when they talk of God.

2. *Replacement of God by a Value-System.* There can be purpose in life without God, however. Many of the best-educated people of America are fully equipped with conscience and interest in their fellows—but also with the conviction that belief in God is unintelligent and probably superstitious. Thus the *value* of God is seen by men who do not believe in God. And if the value of God is not seen, then the value of value is seen, and the result, in any event, is to substitute some kind of value system for God.

In its more atheistic varieties, the value-system is frankly established without any reference to God whatever, at least no intentional reference. Instead, a criterion of truth or value out of man's effort to exist is usually proposed. In the philosophy of John Dewey, for example, the starting point is man's need for growth in interaction with his biological, social, and political environment. Truth under this system is not what is revealed, but rather what man discovers for himself that is good for growth. The religion of this system becomes the science of consequences: that is followed and honored which is seen to have the greatest consequences for growth.

In a more subtle form of this philosophy, religion (properly purged of God and other fictions from another world) becomes a leading motif. In this form, although an effort is made to get along without God, there is at the same time an admission that the long centuries of God-worship have

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>9</sup> Jaspers, Karl, *Man in the Modern Age*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951, pp. 25-26.

accumulated some values. The intelligent man, even if he is a dedicated naturalist and can never be taken in by myths of God, will examine religion very carefully, along with religiously oriented types of philosophy. He will pick them over for their best elements, then throw away the rest.

Naturalistic philosophizing must become as rich as the idealistic philosophies by incorporating the facts and experiences they emphasized within its more adequate framework and bringing its best critical thoughts to bear on organizing and adjusting them within the pattern of the Good Life. . . . It must take over what is actually valid in the "spiritual life" of the great religious visions.<sup>10</sup>

This type of religion, spoken for here by John Herman Randall, Jr., appeals particularly to the sophisticated but community-minded for whom Sartre's nothingness seems to be going too far. It is respectable, responsible, reasonable, and scientific. Its proponents are mostly sincere men and women who are earnestly convinced that positions on either side of them are extreme.

3. *God as Impersonal Ground of Being.* Some of the intelligent, sophisticated people are nonetheless deeply impressed with the Bible and the faiths which produced it. Respectable atheism, even one that attempts to cull over the great religions for the best that may be in them, is not likely to satisfy them. For one thing, they ask, if the naturalist has to look to the great religions for the enrichment of his own values, it must be these religions that are the source and foundation of the values themselves.

Nevertheless, such men may rebel at some of the elements in traditional Christianity. Not only the Virgin Birth, miracles, and the orthodox claim that the world was created in 4,004 B.C., but also some of the central beliefs of relatively stylish Christianity: the idea of God as an imagined being, e.g., an old man; theories of life after death concocted as a reward for good behavior—such doctrines seem excess baggage.

Many in this camp, if they knew it, have their prophet in Paul Tillich, German-born theologian now teaching at Harvard University. Dr. Tillich's appeal is to the philosophical mind which, for all its sophistication, still seeks Christian commitment. To the ordinary mind, Tillich's God may appear to be no God at all: Tillich has sometimes startled audiences of laymen, in fact, by telling them that God does not "exist." Then he explains (not too intelligibly for the unphilosophical believer): God is best thought of not as a "being" himself, but as that power, that strength, which *causes* things to be. God is our ground of being, or "being itself," to use Tillich's favorite expression.

<sup>10</sup> "Epilogue: The Nature of Naturalism," in Y. H. Krikorian, ed., *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1944, p. 376.

It is downright atheistic, Dr. Tillich goes on to say, to "affirm the existence of God."<sup>11</sup> To say that God exists is to make him into a being, which raises a question properly asked about every being: what is behind this being, causing *it* to exist? If God is to be God, he is beyond being; he must rather be the source of all being. "If God is a being, he is subject to the categories of finitude, especially to space and substance. . . . As the power of being, God transcends every being and also the totality of being—the world."<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Tillich, then, does not have to talk about the "supernatural." There is no "other world" or a God "up there." And yet his concept of God has a real religious thrust. Human anxiety shows how deeply concerned man is with the problem of his own being. "'God' is the answer to the question implied in man's finitude; he is the name for that which concerns man ultimately."<sup>13</sup>

Such a view is philosophical, relevant to modern man's deepest problems, mystical—and likely to be puzzling. Tillich's view is open both to the realities of the modern mind and to the need for religious expression. Further, it builds on the insights of Christian faith. The real difficulty with it becomes apparent on examination of the views of the next position.

4. *Supernaturalism Open to Reason.* Although Tillich presents a powerful concept of God as source of being, this kind of God is impersonal. It is hard to imagine a "ground of being" embodying that highest reality of religious experience: love. A theology which aims toward openness to intelligent questioning and centers at the same time on a God of love is offered by Nels F. S. Ferré, whose books, *The Christian Understanding of God* and his controversial *The Sun and the Umbrella*,<sup>14</sup> have brought him under attacks from both directions in the spectrum of God-belief.

With Ferré, we are probably in or close to the middle of the range: God-beliefs to one side of him shade off into the impersonal, then the value-system, then the nothingness of contemporary attempts to describe man's situation realistically. Views on the other side of Ferré progress steadily toward a transcendent, other-worldly God who mixes less and less with real life.

A close student of the philosophy of the late Alfred North Whitehead, Ferré boldly asserts that supernaturalism, far from being a millstone around

<sup>11</sup> Tillich, P., *Systematic Theology*, I. University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 237.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 235-237.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>14</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1953.



the neck of religion, is actually the most satisfactory means of explaining the world as we know it. The chief symbol for Ferré is not being, as with Tillich, but *agape*, the New Testament word for unselfish love. This kind of love does not just come naturally, it is not of the everyday world. As ordinary men, we are quite unable to conduct ourselves without calculation and self-centeredness. On the other hand, it is this same kind of love that gives history and human affairs their fullest meaning. That is, ordinary philosophizing—speculating about “being,” as Tillich does, or describing the world-process, as Whitehead did—can never fully explain reality.

Such an explanation, says Dr. Ferré, comes through the New Testament idea of *agape*, “the completely outgoing and inclusive Love (who God is) that cannot be derived from, nor explained by, this world and yet who alone can give total meaning to it and salvation for it.”<sup>15</sup>

The first main Christian presupposition for a creative culture, then, is supernaturalism. Christian supernaturalism, secondly, involves faith in a personal God. . . . He is the Ground of Being, not as an impersonal order, however much structured for human good, but as One who by His very nature purposes the total as well as the individual good.<sup>16</sup>

So Ferré's theology is centered on what sound like the traditional Christian affirmations. At the same time, Ferré has seen the need for honest, resolute question-asking of the type that Tillich, Randall, and Sartre do. He has a wide leeway in his theology. He does not insist on subordinate doctrines of Christian orthodoxy which do not seem to make the real point about God, that love is what matters. Thus he does not consider the Virgin Birth a necessary belief—and he has been pilloried for it mercilessly by conservative Christians. Indeed, certain “Christian” beliefs *have* to go out the window, Ferré feels, if the view of God as love is kept uppermost. Eternal punishment in hell is one of these doctrines; he has rejected it as not agreeing with the concept of a loving God.

Ferré has made suggestive advances toward a world Christianity which will let foreign nations express their faiths in their own ways (as Hindu Christianity, Buddhist Christianity, and so on). In its understanding of *agape*, Christianity has much to give to the world; yet, since God works in all societies, Christianity also has much to learn from the world.

5. *Partly Open Supernaturalism*. Forty years ago, during World War I, a Swiss pastor shattered the prevalent, placid theology with a radical

<sup>15</sup> Ferré, N. F. S., “Christian Presuppositions for a Creative Culture,” *Expository Times*, November, 1956, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.



restatement of the concept of God. Though the men he has most influenced scarcely ever endorse his views fully, Karl Barth has probably become the most significant Christian thinker of the twentieth century. His theology recalled the religious world from its naive pre-war confidence stemming from these three easy-going beliefs: (1) progress is inevitable, (2) man is perfectible, and (3) God dwells within man and society.

The horrors of war were evidence enough that these beliefs are faulty. With all his scientific advance, man does not have the key to a perfect society; neither is he the sort of creature who is likely to be able to erase all the defects of his own nature; as a matter of fact, the main trouble with man is that he does not realize just how sinful he is.

At the center of this drastic theological shift is Barth's concept of God, who is "wholly other," *not* within us. God comes to man only when and as he pleases; man has not the slightest suggestion of control over him. This is the only kind of God in whom man can place his trust, it seems to Barth. In view of the failures of technical society to achieve anything like a "kingdom of God," it is not too difficult to sympathize with Barth on this head.

To compare: Ferré's God is supernatural, but also in this world; and the believer, as we have seen, is free to relate his God to the world's questions. For Ferré, supernaturalism is properly combined with intellectual freedom: in a word the concept of God can be open to reason.

With Barth, the stress is all on the supernaturalism, and the questions of the intelligent man about God get hardly any recognition at all in his system. Really responsible thought about God, says Barth, proves itself "by refusing to discuss the basis of its ground, questions such as whether God is, whether there is such a thing as revelation."<sup>17</sup> Such discussions, Barth thinks, amount to taking unbelief seriously, to turning away from God. And one of the worst things of all is to shape one's presentation of God to the world by fitting it to the world's modes of thought:

Even the greatest, humblest, openest readiness on the Church's part to have something told her by the world might certainly mean that for the first time she is *really* ceasing to think of taking her special responsibility more seriously, and is once more allowing her energies to be dissipated; under the delusion that all she has failed in is consciousness of the times.<sup>18</sup>

That is, for a minister to find ways to "interest" people in his sermons, e.g., leading off with something out of the day's news, may be treason to

<sup>17</sup> Barth, K., *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, I. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

God. The whole idea of preaching is to point to God, who by his very nature does not dwell on the newspaper pages, but rather in heaven. This God comes to us through the Scriptures, not the world.

This seems at first glance pretty much a closed-circuit view of God. On the other hand, at many points, Barthian theology is completely open to intelligent questions and the results of human inquiry. On occasion, for example, Barth himself has used the term "myth" (or "saga") to describe the Bible's way of speaking about God. Certainly Scripture is not *literally* the Word of God; that is one of the themes Barth hammers continually. The Bible to him is the medium or locus through which God speaks.

Moreover, Barth accepts the results of modern biblical research—the kind of study, for example, which has demonstrated that the first five books of the Bible, far from having been written by Moses,<sup>1</sup> were put together from four sources, and that its Jewish author-editors revised this material extensively as late as 400 B.C. Though Barth rules out reasoning and philosophizing as legitimate ways of knowing God, he uses reason and philosophy extensively—for example, in ruling them out. The more than five thousand pages of his dogmatic work show the profoundest appreciation of modern thought and its ways, though this element is often covert and concealed. Barth's theology, though it has raised God to the heights of otherness and supernaturalism, and is a powerful enemy to contact with the world, is far from being the most extreme other-worldly God-view current. America far exceeds Barth in this direction.

6. *Closed Supernaturalism.* Just before he began his crusade in New York in May, 1957, the conservative evangelist, Billy Graham, granted an interview which was published in the *New York Times Magazine*. In comments on the Bible, Graham provides ready material for comparison with Karl Barth. Barth's view of God seems open-handed and liberal when set alongside Graham's. On the subject of reason and the Bible, for example, Graham is unwilling to grant room for discussion. God has revealed himself in the Bible as it stands, and criticism even of the careful, scholarly type, is likely to take the inquirer away from God rather than to him. As Graham told his interviewer:

Suppose I take this Bible and say there're parts of it—let's suppose this—that are not inspired of God, that are not authoritative. All right, then I become judge. And . . . after a while I have about ten million different kinds of Bibles because one scholar says this and one scholar says that and one scholar says another, until after a while I have no authority.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "As Billy Graham Sees His Role," *New York Times Magazine*, April 21, 1957, pp. 22, 25.

Graham concluded that he would rather settle such questions by simply taking God at his word. Supernaturalism of this intensity takes God out of thought, if not out of life.

Conservative Christianity has also been criticized for offering the world a "trap-door" type religion that purports to transport the believer into heaven, but does nothing about the social evils of the secular world. Whether Billy Graham may be saddled with this charge is a debatable point; but it is certain that many churchmen in his sector of the God-belief spectrum, the fundamentalists in particular, tend to overlook the ambiguities of existence and to solve all problems by denying that they exist. "If the world would but accept Christ as savior," declared an evangelist in Nashville, Tennessee, recently, "all of our problems would vanish overnight."<sup>20</sup> Such a solution is chiefly an echo of medieval Christianity, which could literally vanquish humanity's problems by whisking the believer away from them—and by teaching him that while he was waiting to be whisked, the problems were unimportant, anyway.

Conservative religion affirms God with all its might. That is something to be admired about it and to be desired in more sophisticated forms of God-belief. But this form of religion just as stringently banishes God from the realm of reason; and intelligent relating of God to the world at large, the very place he is most needed, becomes increasingly difficult.

7. *The Sealed-off God of the Cultured.* Not even conservative Christianity has the most other-worldly God. It seals off God from reason and social intercourse, but not from the lives of isolated individuals. The most radical supernaturalism of all, as strange as it may seem, comes not from the conservative or fundamentalist Christians, but from some of the most intelligent people of all: the highly cultured who seal God off not from thought but from life itself.

Recently I was a speaker at a university panel discussion which considered the subject, "Is God Necessary?" Others on the panel included a philosopher, a physicist, and a psychologist. The latter two were quite willing to discuss the world's deepest problems, including religious matters, in the terms of their professions. The physicist described some of the scientific formulas and concepts which seemed to him to offer a rational basis for understanding the universe. The psychologist described views of personality which claim to offer an adequate ground for understanding the individual and his needs.

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<sup>20</sup> *Nashville Tennessean*, April 25, 1957.

Neither speaker, in this part of his presentation, had anything to say about God. Everything presumably was to be explained within the framework of science. Neither man, however, was willing to stop his discussion at this point. Each, before he sat down, came out affirmatively for a belief in God. But in both cases it was a God pulled in arbitrarily (and sentimentally)—and completely outside the principles of the sciences which these men had been describing. Both had what they called a "personal" belief in God; but it was God-belief at the Sunday School level, not in the same league with scientific discourse.

This kind of God is even more exclusive than that of the revivalists. Physics and psychology, respectively, were the grounds upon which all explanation of ultimates was to be made. God was a spore somewhere in the complex, having no sovereignty. At this extreme, God becomes so exclusive and extra-human that he verges on disappearance. The practical end-result is a God of nothingness—which brings us all the way around the circle, back to the starting point.

### III

Viewed from a stance half-way between, the concepts of God at both extremes seem unreal and logically impossible, and appear to lack vitality. If rational discourse has any meaning, says Nels Ferré (the theologian whom I have put in the middle position), God can neither be "simply nothing" nor "totally other."<sup>21</sup> In practical terms, this means that the ultimate of nothingness in the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre is deceptive. Actually, Sartre has affiliated himself from time to time with various causes—as a member of the Resistance, as a Communist sympathizer, as an anti-American, as a neutral. This program points to no God of nothingness. It is rather a fitful alternation among objective value-systems. It might be said that Sartre is actually a believer in the God of value-system (position 2 above), but that his system is a broken, discontinuous series of values. Sartre's God is one not of nothingness, but of episodes.

At the other extreme, when God is made wholly other, the world and what is in it, including men, become entirely discounted. As Ferré puts it: "The wholly other can be known exactly in no way at all. It cannot even be meaningfully intended except as a contradictory denial of all meaning, theoretically; or as an attempt to escape completely from all life and responsibility. . . ."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Ferré, N. F. S., *Faith and Reason*. Harper & Brothers, 1946, p. 199.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

The real choice, one that is extremely difficult to make, lies between the reasoning faith of men like Tillich and Ferré, and the moderate atheisms, especially the philosophies of the naturalists who replace God by a value-system. At the risk of oversimplification, perhaps the issue may be put in terms of opposing main themes. At the bottom of philosophies like Dewey's and Randall's are motifs such as growth, biological and social; understanding the world on man's terms; mastery of the environment. To the Christian eye, this camp all in all seems to be dedicated principally to the cause of self-preservation. At the base of the theological systems of Tillich and Ferré are ultimates centered around an opposite theme: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it" (Luke 17:33). Such a principle variously seems Pickwickian, naive, or basically dishonest to naturalists; even those who fully approve are pretty sure it can be worked out among men without reference to the supernatural.

(There are other arguments between the positions, of course. The naturalist philosophers want to build on the verifiable. Ferré protests that such methods offer no real explanations of process as a whole, especially the coming of the new into history.)

Every position of our seven offers some truth in its God-view, even the view that there is no God. Sartre's despair, symbolized in his God of nothingness, is a correction of utopian theologies which mendaciously offer all the answers (either now or in the Kingdom to come). On the other hand, the hard-headed tenacity of fundamentalists is in many respects much more desirable than the erratic loyalties of Sartreans and drifting eggheads. If the extremes were lopped off, contemporary thought about God would be deprived of range as well as depth. The tensely opposed demands of enterprising intelligence and reverent submission, however, will usually come into balance somewhere between.

# Some Thoughts on the Meaning of Christ's Death

JOHN B. COBB, JR.

## I

MOST PROTESTANT INTERPRETATIONS of the meaning of Jesus' death fall in two general classes. On the one hand, a substantial number of supernaturalists faithful to the traditional solutions of orthodoxy adhere steadfastly to some kind of satisfaction or governmental theory. The difficulties, they feel, arise from failure to appreciate the way in which God transcends all moral, logical, and spatio-temporal categories. When men realize the complete inadequacy of their ideas to apply literally to God, they will be able to accept the mystery of the atonement in the context of the mystery of the Trinity without violation of their fundamental moral and spiritual insights.

On the other hand, a substantial number of critics of orthodoxy have converged upon the view that what is initially and primarily changed by the death of Christ is not God's inner relationship to man but rather man's relationship to God. The atonement reveals or symbolizes an eternal truth about God. Any change in God's relationship with man consequent upon the atonement results from man's response to the death of Christ, not from any immediate effect which that death has upon God.

Many thoughtful Protestants, however, do not find either of these alternatives quite adequate. They feel that the critics of orthodoxy are right in their insistence that the purpose of Christ's suffering cannot be to overcome an inability or unwillingness in God to forgive man his sins. Nevertheless they realize, vaguely perhaps but insistently, the fundamental inadequacy of the liberal view. Christian belief and Christian fellowship are founded upon the faith, not that God simply revealed his eternal nature in Christ, but that in Christ's death on the cross he performed a decisive work which created new objective possibilities for the relationship between man and God. Side by side with revelation, of equal or even greater impor-

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tance for the interpretation of the work of Christ, must be placed his victory over sin, a victory in which we may share.

Gustaf Aulén has shown that a third interpretation was in fact vigorously articulated in the early centuries of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> It usually took the form of what is often called the ransom theory of the atonement, but Aulén prefers to speak of it as the "classic" or "dramatic" view. According to this view God through Christ's life and death defeats the forces of evil and in principle liberates man from them. This theory, he points out, dominated pre-scholastic Christian thought, was revived by Luther, but was lost again in both Protestant orthodoxy and Protestant liberalism.

Aulén has done much to revitalize this interpretation, so attractive in its essentials to the modern Protestant mind. Yet he has not undertaken to complete the task. He has pointed out that this is in fact the view native to the Christian faith. Yet he has left this theory couched in a mythological form which as such cannot be accepted as literally true. Aulén fully recognizes the crudity of the expressions which he finds in the Fathers and in Luther. Clearly his own view is that in these mythological forms there is expressed the profound truth that God in Christ won a victory over evil. But Aulén does not undertake in *Christus Victor* to provide a literal explanation of the kinds of evil forces which Christ's death overcame or of how his death could achieve such an end.

This article assumes that Aulén is fundamentally right in his thesis, and that the dramatic view is at least *an* essential ingredient in the biblical and early Christian doctrine of the atonement. It assumes further that since the major alternative interpretations of Christ's death have been found unsatisfactory by many Protestants, every effort should be made to explore the possibilities of the dramatic view. If this is to be done, however, some literal meaning must be assigned to it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aulén, G., *Christus Victor*, translated by A. G. Herbert. London: S. P. C. K., 1931.

<sup>2</sup> The word "literal" is used repeatedly in this essay and the idea it suggests is central to my purpose. Hence a note of clarification is in order. I distinguish the "literal" from the "nonliteral" in terms of the intention of the speaker. If we intend to use language chiefly for its power to stimulate imagination, or to communicate through the emotional associations of words, or to provide suggestive images which differ from the actual images but throw light upon them, or to "describe" what we believe to be ineffable, then we are using language nonliterally. If, however, we intend to describe a situation or occurrence, which in principle we believe to be describable, with maximum precision, using words with primary attention to their denotative meaning, then we are using language literally.

Under questioning we usually find great difficulty in refining and clarifying our meaning, and this difficulty applies also to the present essay. Maximum clarity and precision can be achieved only in the highly technical language of a fully articulated philosophical system. This means, paradoxically, that the clearest and most precise discussions—those in which the ideal of literalness is most fully attained—are intelligible only to those few who are conversant with a special vocabulary. In this essay I seek only that degree of literalness which can be attained in nontechnical language. For further clarification I would use a strictly Whiteheadian vocabulary.



The purpose of this article is to indicate how a literal meaning can be given to the doctrine that Christ in his death won a victory over transpersonal forces of evil. It does so by approaching afresh the whole question of the work of Christ centering in his death. No attempt at proof or demonstration is made. If the canon of rational probability were decisive, this sort of discussion would be an absurd imposition upon credulity. If, however, our concern is to ask how the teachings of Scripture can *possibly* be true, then their restatement, however improbable from any other point of view,<sup>1</sup> may still have very considerable interest to those predisposed to believe on other grounds that they *are* true.

## II

The investigation of the meaning of Christ's death may well begin with an analysis of man's situation *apart from Christ as apprehended in Christian experience*. This may mean either the universal situation prior to the coming of Christ or the situation in the Christian era insofar as we may view it in abstraction from the impact of Christ. Five elements in this situation may be distinguished.

The first element in man's situation apart from Christ is knowledge or possible knowledge of a law of righteousness. This law may be either a specific verbally formulated moral code or the common universal awareness of right and wrong. This combines with the universal possibility of the recognition of a righteous deity to establish in principle the way of righteousness as the will of God. The presence of this element in the situation establishes (in abstraction from the entire human situation) the possibility of man's maintaining a right relationship with God.

The second element in the human situation apart from Christ as apprehended in Christian experience is man's spiritual sinfulness which centers in his pride or false self-centeredness. Although each man knows that he is not the center of the universe, he persists in interpreting all reality from his own peculiar perspective. Although he sees that what men must do to sustain the human fellowship he should himself do, he continues to make exceptions for his own benefit from principles which he recognizes as valid for others. Hence the righteousness which is always still recognized as an abstract ideal possibility is in fact never achieved. Indeed its closest approximations are corrupted and perverted by pride into man's most serious sins. The more clearly the moral law is understood the more keenly men realize their sinfulness and despair of achieving righteousness. Those few whose approximation to obedience is greatest develop self-righteousness

and contempt for ordinary sinners—an attitude which alienates them from God as surely as the crassest sin.

Both man's impulsion toward righteousness and his tendency toward sin are accentuated by his environment, although not initially derived therefrom. His environment may be subdivided into personal and institutional aspects. The personal aspects of the environment constitute the third element in man's situation here being delineated. They range from the very obvious facts of the behavior and appearance of those about us to the very subtle effects which the presence of certain personalities seems to have upon our moods and feelings. If the persons in our environment practise an unaffected and unself-righteous morality, the wholesomeness of their character is bound to affect us, to strengthen our impulses toward obedience to the highest that we know. But in fact there is no such morality in pure form. Morality is always tainted with pride and hence evokes resentment and jealousy as well as emulation. But the personal environment apart from Christ is characterized also by much outright immorality. Therefore, it strengthens still further those tendencies in us which are in revolt against God's law.

The fourth element in man's situation is his institutional environment which is composed not only of class and national relationships and economic arrangements but also of the social mores and the cultural ethos. These institutions have the objective possibility, that is, in abstraction from human pride, of embodying man's highest understanding of righteousness. But the pride and perversity of individuals are projected upon institutions and there magnified and perpetuated, so that the institutions of each generation, although in part motivating man toward righteousness, in part also accentuate his tendency to the perversion of righteousness through pride and even, in all too common periods of degeneracy, motivate him directly toward gross unrighteousness.

In addition to the four elements in the human situation outlined above there is a fifth category of explanation which played an important role in early Christian thought but which today we find more difficult to employ. This is the objective power of sin and evil which exists prior to and independently of particular sinful deeds, sinful human personalities, and evil social institutions. The early Christians interpreted this power in terms of a primitive demonology which presupposed a prescientific cosmology.

During much of the modern period the idea of the objective power of sin and evil has been abandoned, partly because of the prevailing optimism and partly because of the traditional dependence of this idea upon primitive

cosmology. In wide circles today the optimistic spirit has given way to a painful acknowledgment of the power of evil over human destiny. Many contemporary Christians wish to avail themselves again of the concept of the objective power of evil as a category of explanation, but most of them cannot return to the prescientific cosmology upon which the concept depended in early Christian thought. Clearly an urgent need exists for the establishment of an alternative basis for the concept, but few have dared seriously to undertake this task.

If the form which such an alternative would take cannot even be hinted at, it would seem that the path of honesty is to abandon the concept of the objective power of evil and to limit the explanation of the role of evil in human affairs to those elements discussed above. However, if this is done, it should be frankly acknowledged that the possibility of making sense out of the classical or dramatic interpretation of the atonement is greatly reduced.

Within the context of the conventional sensationalistic view of human experience, no concept of objective evil power is possible. Clearly no such power is seen, touched or heard. But although this point of view is still widely maintained, its inadequacies have begun to appear increasingly manifest. The explorations of depth psychology have led to concepts of the operation of the mind many of which are difficult to harmonize with sensationalistic doctrines. The experimental evidence for extrasensory perception is becoming impressive. Alfred North Whitehead, probably the greatest philosophic mind of the twentieth century, has developed a non-sensationalistic epistemology far more in keeping with both contemporary knowledge in physiology and modern developments in physics.

One of Whitehead's fundamental doctrines is that every actual entity prehends selectively all the occasions in its past. To put it another way, the present moment of experience, whether conscious or unconscious, is affected by all that has transpired in the past. Thus the past, even the distant past, has a profound influence upon the present which cannot be accounted for exclusively or primarily in terms of sensation, although it is true that in our conscious experience sensation plays the dominant role. Presumably the thoughts, the purposes, and the suffering of past men and women are not excluded from the total actuality which is causally efficacious for the present.

Whitehead did not develop this doctrine for theological purposes and might not be entirely pleased to find it put to such a use. However, it

does seem to make intelligible the view that man is influenced by the past spiritual experiences of the race in ways which transcend present contacts through sensation. It seems to suggest that man lives in part in a kind of mental or psychic environment which might well have subtle effects upon his experience, especially at its nonconscious levels. If so, then each new occasion of human experience is partially a product of this aspect of its past and in turn contributes something in this dimension as well as others to the total past of later occasions.

If what we may now call man's psychic environment can be employed as a literal translation of the demonic forces of early Christianity, then we may add the fifth element to our analysis of man's situation apart from Christ. To the Christian consciousness this psychic environment has been an additional contributive factor of utmost importance to the total reign of evil in human history. Each man entering the world is alienated from God, not only by his personal willful transgressions of God's law, but prior to that by the spiritual situation into which he enters. Only such a concept as this can make sense of the biblical view that though the alienation of man from God is man-caused it is objective to individual persons.

In summary, we may conclude that to the Christian consciousness the situation apart from Christ appears wholly self-defeating. It contains within itself no principle by which evil and sin can be overcome. Rather it seems that the pride of each individual tends cumulatively to corrupt the environment for new generations. True, there are moral reformers of the highest stature—some perhaps who almost attain to that pure righteousness in which one might stand justified before God. Their efforts have certainly prevented the full decay of institutions and of interpersonal relationships. Yet they could introduce into the situation no new principle by which the fundamental tendency to cumulative evil could be overcome.

### III

The view of the present article is that the fundamentally new principle which Christ introduced into the situation is that of forgiveness. He introduced this principle first by his teaching. Whatever might have been the objective validity of the idea that human righteousness might establish a right relationship with God, Jesus saw that in fact the effort to achieve righteousness did not result in such a relationship. He taught that what man's best efforts could not achieve was available freely. God gives what man cannot attain. The conditions for receiving the gift are simply genuinely

desiring to possess it and trusting God to give it. These conditions might be fulfilled more readily by the desperate sinner than by the relatively righteous individual who had based his ego-picture upon his own superior achievement.

But Jesus was quite aware that the mere verbal proclamation of this truth about God would not transform the situation. Men can perhaps be satisfied with the rather complacent belief that God is forgiving love until they become fully and deeply aware of the fearsome way in which they have sinned against that love. When the total realization of the sinfulness of sin becomes vividly present to us, our general belief in the forgiving love of God becomes a source of increased guiltiness and pain rather than of comfort. Men need to be reassured that even *this* sin, this insult against the awful majesty of God, but even worse against his love, is forgiven. And Jesus' ministry consisted in part of such a proclamation addressed to desperate individuals by word and by deed, that they might know themselves personally forgiven.

Thus by proclaiming in his message the forgiving love of God, by himself manifesting this new spirit toward sinners in his communion with them, and by bringing to bear upon individuals the full weight of his awful authority to forgive sins, Jesus released into the world a new principle. The man who knows himself as a forgiven sinner, insofar as he is determined by this fact, is, on the one hand, freed from the blighting power of his own past over him and, on the other hand, enabled to escape the final corruption of righteousness through pride. Hence he is able to mediate to others the redemptive power of forgiveness.

Men do not repent in the presence of sinfulness like their own, for this merely reinforces the power of sin. Men do not repent in the presence of a contemptuous self-righteousness, for this evokes defensive mechanisms and resentment. Men can repent only when there is directed toward them a spirit of forgiving love which stems in turn only from the forgiven sinner. In his presence one can know that one's true self in all of its sinfulness is already accepted, and hence one can acknowledge his sinfulness to himself. Thus even when the name of Christ is not mentioned at all, even when his teaching is not explicitly referred to, a new principle which he introduced into the world is redemptively at work.

The life and teaching of Jesus short of his death were already the beginning of his redemptive work. His death was in the first instance simply the completion of his revelation of God's forgiving nature. The

most poignant of all the utterances of Jesus was the prayer of forgiveness for his tormentors which came down from the cross. The expression of forgiving love toward the perpetrators of the most terrible of crimes by the innocent sufferer from that crime demonstrates the unlimited possibility of forgiveness.

The death of Jesus also completed and reinforced the message of his life by paving the way for the resurrection. The reappearance of the Crucified One lent a transcendent authority to his teaching and personality which immeasurably intensified its efficacy for the apostles. Much that might otherwise rapidly have been forgotten became the very basis of their lives and work and was immortalized in the written record.

Nevertheless, the early Christians did not regard Christ's death as merely the completion of his life's work in this sense, or as merely the necessary precondition of resurrection. On the contrary, the death occupied a unique and special place. It was felt to have had a special objective efficacy, the appropriation of which was the very essence of Christian experience, at least for those who had not known Jesus personally. In the early Christian movement only the message of what Jesus had done by his death could rival in importance the message of the consummation soon to come. Yet to the modern mind most of the interpretations of Jesus' death which go beyond this account appear to be either incredible or false to Jesus' own revelation of the character of God.

#### IV

In order to approach our question freshly we may consider the situation from our perspective as sensitive sinners. We see ourselves as under the rightful jurisdiction of the moral law but yet as constantly sinning against that law. We feel that we are guilty and that we deserve the inexorable consequences of our guilt, namely, spiritual and physical suffering and death. Our feeling of guilt is intensified by contact with the life and teaching of Jesus.

We may learn from this teaching that God is willing to forgive sins if we are willing to accept this forgiveness. In the actual presence of Jesus this might have been credible, and we might actually have found ourselves forgiven. But the vast numbers of us who must be moved indirectly, even those of us who yield intellectual assent to the new idea about God, are not likely to find our actual status greatly altered thereby. We know that whatever God's willingness may be, we are not meeting the conditions for receiving forgiveness—even if these conditions are simply to *believe* in



God's willingness—for such belief must be more than the momentary affirmative entertainment of an idea. Consciousness of the idea, therefore, serves rather to intensify still more our shame in our refusal to meet so simple a demand and to accentuate our sense of the justice of the inexorable punishment.

But the New Testament comes to us with another message. It does not deny the objective structure of guilt and its punishment. It does not tell us that our guilt is cleansed merely by our believing that God does not hate us for our sin but rather loves us in spite of it—important as this truth certainly is. It tells us rather that the inexorable consequence of our guilt in the context of the moral order of the world is indeed suffering and death, but that this suffering and death has been endured vicariously for us, that the price of our sin has already been paid on Calvary, and that we, therefore, are free from the law of sin and death. This truth becomes efficacious for us when we accept it in grateful belief.

What is demanded of me is, then, not a generalized idea about God's attitude toward man, but the concrete belief that Jesus' death is sufficient for my salvation. It is not surprising that this belief commonly takes the form of the satisfaction theory, for God, before the atonement, is assumed to have had toward us the attitude which our own consciousness of our deserts imposed upon ourselves. As we felt ourselves doomed justly by our sin we assumed that God embodied that justice by which we were judged, whereas now when we find ourselves forgiven through Christ's death we assume that God's attitude toward us is transformed into forgiveness by that death. Thus the satisfaction theory of the atonement and the faith through which we experience reconciliation stand in the closest relationship to each other. It was inevitable that Christian thought, even the New Testament itself, should be colored in part by this theory. Its difficulties do not appear except from a more detached vantage point than that of the sinner experiencing forgiveness in Christ. Yet these difficulties are not unreal.

What alternative may be offered? If we are compelled to acknowledge that God was ever merciful and ever forgiving, then shall we judge that Christ's death was a concession to our weakness? This view has been suggested in the analysis above. It seems far more possible for men who are keenly aware of their sinfulness to believe that it is overcome in a great act of suffering, even if that suffering be that of another, than simply to accept the eternal reality of forgiveness. "Christ died for me" is more



psychologically efficacious to free one from guilt than "God forgives me."

If this is correct, then Christ died to enable us to believe that God forgives rather than to establish objectively the conditions of our forgiveness. There is much to be said for this view, yet its acceptance ultimately undercuts itself. The belief that "Christ died in order that I might believe that God forgives me" does not have the potency of the belief that "Christ died for my sin." The New Testament speaks in terms of our identifying ourselves with Christ in a way of which this view makes nonsense. It seems that what actually saves us is the belief in the objective efficacy of Christ's death, a belief through which we appropriate that efficacy to ourselves and so enter into a new life.

We have denied ourselves the use of the satisfaction theory according to which the cross was necessary in order that God's justice be satisfied, but we have felt the inadequacy of the view that the end of Christ's death is only to affect our attitudes and our beliefs about God. The death must have some objective efficacy which can be appropriated through belief. What can this efficacy be? Once again we are driven toward the dramatic view of the atonement. If the antagonist is interpreted in terms of a psychic environment, the objective efficacy of Christ's death can be understood as a modification of that environment.

The conception of the "psychic environment" is formulated above as a special case of the general doctrine of the influence of the total past upon the present. According to it, Christ's experience on the cross would indeed affect the psychic environment since all experience does so. But clearly what Christian faith affirms is no such trivial fact as this. The Christian witness implies that the effect of this one event is at least potentially capable of counteracting the whole cumulative force of spiritual evil which surrounds mankind. This in turn must mean that some occasions may have potentially altogether disproportionate efficacy for their future either because of their intrinsic nature or because of their selection for emphasis in God's experience. It would seem to mean also that the possibility of such disproportionate efficacy rests not only upon the moral and spiritual character of the subject but also upon factors to be found only in the experiences of suffering and death.

The concept of the psychic environment coupled with the idea that particular events may constitute a disproportionate part of the relevant past of future occasions provides a context in which we may affirm literally that Christ died in order to destroy in principle the otherwise unchallenged

power of transpersonal evil over all mankind. Clearly such an assertion is not derived from those concepts which make it intelligible. It is derived only from the Christian experience of salvation felt to be in dependence upon the cross of Christ. The acknowledgment of our need for such power and the belief that it is available to us through Christ are the processes whereby we positively apprehend this redemptive element in our psychic environment. To the extent that men do this, the victory which Christ's death won in principle becomes actualized in their lives.

The foregoing is intended as a suggestion as to how literal meaning can be assigned to the persistent Christian idea that Christ's death was objectively a victory over evil. It is not intended to supplant all other theories. The symbolic and revelatory significance of the cross for Christians is indisputable. Its power for the inspiration of noble service and sacrifice is matchless. Although the satisfaction and governmental theories have been rejected, some doctrine of the importance of the crucifixion in God's own life is wholly compatible with all that has been said.

In conclusion it may be pointed out that every effort has been made to avoid specific Christological presuppositions. This is because of the conviction that Christology depends upon soteriology rather than the reverse. It is the superhuman and divine character of Jesus' work which leads his followers to affirmations as to his ontological as well as his moral divinity.

# Tillich and Freud on Sin

HARRY M. TIEBOUT, JR.

PAUL TILlich has pointed out the importance of Freud's psychological insights for the theologian who is engaged in the task of describing man's estrangement.<sup>1</sup> In this paper, we should like to show some of the marked similarities between Freud's analysis of human estrangement, as manifested in neurosis and other pathological conditions, and Tillich's analysis of sin.

In his analysis of sin in the second volume of the *Systematic Theology*, Tillich deals first with the presuppositions of sin, then with the three marks of sin, and finally, with the expressions of the sinful or estranged state. We shall take up each of these topics and try to point out analogues in Freud's thought.

## I

Two main presuppositions are required for the concept of sin. The first is the concept of finite freedom. The very nature of man is finite freedom. In every human act, decision and destiny are involved. Sin cannot be understood either as a simple moral choice or as mechanical necessity. It is a synthesis of act and fact. "The individual act of existential estrangement is . . . an act of freedom which is imbedded, nevertheless, in the universal destiny of existence. . . . Existence is rooted both in ethical freedom and in tragic destiny. If the one or the other side is denied, the human situation becomes incomprehensible."<sup>2</sup>

Tillich points out that the destiny element in estrangement has been interpreted according to various deterministic philosophies ". . . physically, by a mechanistic determinism; biologically, by theories of the decadence of the biological power of life; psychologically, as the compulsory force of the unconscious . . ." and so forth. But, he adds, "None of these explanations accounts for the feeling of personal responsibility that man has for his acts in the state of estrangement."<sup>3</sup> Tillich insists that this

<sup>1</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, The University of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

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freedom is a function not of some special agency in man, such as the will, but of the complete self.

One should speak of the freedom of *man*, indicating that every part and every function which constitutes man a personal self participates in his freedom.<sup>4</sup>

When I make a decision, it is the concrete totality of everything that constitutes my being which decides, not an epistemological subject. This refers to body structure, psychic strivings, spiritual character. . . . Destiny is not a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, as formed by nature, history, and myself.<sup>5</sup>

This conception of finite freedom would seem to rule out at once any real similarity between Tillich's and Freud's analyses, for Freud's whole account of the operations of the human psyche is avowedly deterministic—or, more precisely, Cartesian. For Freud, the self consists of various psychological forces, the instincts, which Freud regarded as "the psychological concomitants of biological processes."<sup>6</sup> These psycho-biological forces operate according to fixed laws and are given their specific direction by factors operating in the hereditary structure of the organism and in the childhood environment. This mechanism is transcended by an ego, which can control, within limits, the subrational psychic apparatus in the manner in which a skilled mechanic can control the mechanism of an automobile engine, *viz.*, through special technical knowledge. This special knowledge is provided by psychoanalytic science. And Freud describes psychoanalysis as an engineering enterprise in which the blind forces of superego and id are harnessed by the rational ego.<sup>7</sup> According to this view, teleology is restricted to the satisfaction of the biological drives. All the so-called "higher aims" are substitute-aims produced by the blockage of the original drives (the aim-inhibited or sublimated impulses). Reason provides no goals; its function is purely utilitarian, to enable man to satisfy his biological drives most expeditiously.

If Freud remained within this mechanistic framework, there would, indeed, be no comparison with Tillich. But in many of his actual descriptions of human behavior, Freud transgresses this framework and uses language that presupposes what Tillich calls "finite freedom." Thus, on the question of responsibility, Freud explicitly repudiates any deterministic disavowal of guilt. In discussing responsibility for dream contents, he states:

Obviously one must hold oneself responsible for the evil impulses of one's dream. . . . Unless the content of the dream (rightly understood) is inspired by alien spirits,

<sup>4</sup> Tillich, Paul, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, The University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184-5.

<sup>6</sup> Freud, Sigmund, *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. London: Hogarth Press, 1949, p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

it is a part of my own being. . . . and if, in defence, I say that what is unconscious and repressed in me is not my "ego," then I shall not be basing my position on psychoanalysis. . . .

It is true that in the metapsychological sense this bad repressed content does not belong to my "ego"—that is, assuming that I am a morally blameless individual—but to an "id" upon which my ego is seated. But this ego developed out of the id, it forms with it a single biological unit, it is only a specially modified peripheral portion of it, it is subject to its influences and obeys the suggestions that arise from the id. For any vital purpose, a separation of the ego from the id would be a hopeless undertaking.<sup>8</sup>

Freud adds that anyone who "for the purposes of moral valuation" seeks to "disregard the evil in the id" and not to make his ego responsible for it will nevertheless find himself psychologically compelled to acknowledge his guilt. And the person who pretends to be "better" than he was created" will attain nothing more in life than "hypocrisy or inhibition." And he concludes: "The physician will leave it to the jurist to construct a responsibility that is artificially limited to the metapsychological ego. It is notorious that the greatest difficulties are encountered by attempts to derive from such a construction any practical consequences not in contradiction to human feelings."<sup>9</sup>

Here (as in some other places),<sup>10</sup> Freud comes close to Tillich's notion of the involvement and responsibility of the total self. Far from replacing the concept of freedom by determinism, Freud extends the range of freedom and responsibility to include the unconscious, vital substructure. In fact, so far as I know, there is not one passage in Freud's writings where he denies human responsibility and guilt. If theologians would pay more attention to what Freud actually does and less attention to what he and his followers say he is doing, they would find him a most potent ally. For many of his descriptions of the relations between ego, superego, and id and of the operations of the instincts cannot possibly be reconciled with his biological assumptions but clearly require a concept of spirit or finite freedom or subjectivity.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Freud, S., *Collected Papers*, Vol. V. London: Hogarth Press, 1950, pp. 156-7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> Freud, S., *The Ego and the Id*, Hogarth Press, 1949, pp. 71-83; *The Problem of Anxiety*, W. W. Norton & Co., pp. 29-30; *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Garden City Press, 1943, pp. 290-1.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., *The Ego and the Id*, p. 83: "It (the ego) is not only the ally of the id; it is also a submissive slave who courts the love of his master. Whenever possible, it tries to remain on good terms with the id; it draws the veil of its preconscious rationalizations over the id's unconscious demands; it pretends that the id is showing obedience to the mandates of reality, even when in fact it is remaining obdurate and immovable; it throws a disguise over the id's conflicts with reality, and, if possible, over its conflicts with the super-ego too. Its position midway between the id and reality tempts it only too often to become sycophantic, opportunist and false, like a politician who sees the truth but wants to keep his place in popular favor."

The second presupposition of the concept of sin is the distinction between man's essential being and his existential estrangement. The state of essential being "is not an actual stage of human development."<sup>12</sup> There is no time in a person's life when he was in this state. Essential being is a state of potentiality. Tillich says it can be pictured as one of "dreaming innocence," where "dreaming" connotes the pre-actual and "innocence" connotes "lack of actual experience, lack of personal responsibility, and lack of moral guilt."<sup>13</sup> Although the transition from essence to existence is transtemporal, it must be told as a story. The transition takes place when man becomes aware of his finitude and his freedom.

The analogue in Freud's thought to the essential state of "dreaming innocence" is that of "primary narcissism." This state is conceived by Freud as characterizing the foetus and newly born infant. In the condition of primary narcissism, there is no awareness of the limitation of the power of the ego ("omnipotence of thought"); indeed, there is no differentiation between the ego and external world at all. There is, rather, a mystical sense of union with the Whole, of the complete merging of self and other.

After the shock of birth and a series of traumatic encounters with the environment (weaning, toilet-training, "castration" threats), this primary narcissism is shattered, and we become aware of our powerlessness in a hostile world. Nevertheless, the memory of the infantile "oceanic feeling," "which embraced the universe and expressed an inseparable connection of the ego with the external world,"<sup>14</sup> survives in the adult and "is kept alive perpetually by the fear of what the superior power of fate will bring."<sup>15</sup> Whenever the external world becomes too threatening, we withdraw our libido from external objects and turn it back upon our egos. This transformation of object-libido into ego-libido is "secondary narcissism," and is, when carried beyond a certain point, pathological.

Herbert Marcuse in his *Eros and Civilization*<sup>16</sup> tries to develop a theory of creative narcissism in which narcissism is not a delusive omnipotence of thought, but a joyous participation in the creative forces of the universe. For Freud, however, the oceanic feeling is unrealistic and immature. Man cannot possibly return to this condition; he cannot regain his state of dreaming innocence, although he is nevertheless constantly haunted by the memory of his "limitless narcissism" and is constantly

<sup>12</sup> *Systematic Theology* II, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

<sup>14</sup> Freud, S., *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Hogarth Press, 1951, p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Boston: Beacon Press, 1955.



seeking such a return. This is also in agreement with Tillich, since Tillich does not equate the essential state with perfection. The symbol of "Adam before the Fall" is not a symbol of perfection, as orthodox theology would have it, but of "the dreaming innocence of undecided potentialities." Only the conscious union of essence and existence (as symbolized in Jesus as the Christ or New Being) is perfection.<sup>17</sup> Here, of course, Freud differs from Tillich in having no conception of a union of essence and existence. For Freud, as we shall see later, the complete actualization of human potentialities is found in a Stoic attitude of detachment and resignation, which is quite the opposite of primary narcissism. There is no possibility of any reunion or re communion of the finite self with the Infinite.<sup>18</sup>

It should also be noted that there is no moment in time in which the individual is free from guilt, for primary narcissism contains, in addition to the innocent oceanic feeling, the *hubris* and concupiscence which constitute secondary narcissism. Secondary narcissism presupposes an encounter with the external world. It is a rebellion, a rejection of one's role of finite being—as we shall see in the next section. Thus, paradoxically, guilt is present from the beginning, and in seeking to return to the unitive state, man is in rebellion against the conditions of finitude. And in this Freud again agrees with Tillich. For Tillich admits "Adam before the Fall" was simultaneously moved by the desire to retain dreaming innocence and "the desire to sin," which Tillich calls "a sin which is not yet sin but which is also no longer innocence,"<sup>19</sup> and which consists of the desire to actualize his potentialities over against God. For Tillich as well as for Freud, "sin presupposes itself."

## II

For Tillich, the act of sin consists of unbelief, *hubris*, and concupiscence. Unbelief is "the innermost character of sin."<sup>20</sup> It is the disruption of the unity between man and God, involving "the disruption of man's cognitive participation in God," "the separation of man's will from the will of God,"<sup>21</sup> and "the empirical shift from the blessedness of the divine life to the pleasures of a separated life."<sup>22</sup> Although unbelief is "the act or state in which man in the totality of his being turns away from God,"<sup>23</sup> it should

<sup>17</sup> *Systematic Theology* II, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Freud's conception of the futility of man's attempt to recover his primary narcissism is very close to Sartre's conception of the futility of man's attempt to unite the *Pour-soi* and the *En-soi*.

<sup>19</sup> *Systematic Theology* II, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

not be called intellectual "denial," since questions and answers "already presuppose loss of cognitive union with God,"<sup>24</sup> nor willful "disobedience," since obedience and disobedience "already presuppose the separation of will from will," nor self-love, for "in order to have a self which not only can be loved but can love God, one's center must already have left the divine center to which it belongs and in which self-love and love to God are united."<sup>25</sup>

*Hubris* is "the self-elevation of man into the sphere of the divine."<sup>26</sup> "It is sin in its total form, namely, the other side of unbelief or man's turning away from the divine center to which he belongs. It is turning toward one's self and one's world."<sup>27</sup> The main symptom of *hubris* is that man "does not acknowledge his finitude."<sup>28</sup> "All men have the hidden desire to be like God, and they act accordingly in their self-elevation and self-affirmation. No one is willing to acknowledge, in concrete terms, his finitude, his weakness and his errors, his ignorance and his insecurity, his loneliness and his anxiety."<sup>29</sup> Concupiscence is "the unlimited desire to draw the whole of reality into one's self,"<sup>30</sup> the insatiable desire for unlimited power.<sup>31</sup> Tillich cites the Will to Power as described by Nietzsche and the libido as described by Freud as good examples of concupiscence.<sup>32</sup> Though Tillich is not too clear on this point, *hubris* would seem to be the act of self-elevation, the decision to "go it alone," to be in love with one's self only, to reject one's creaturely lot, and concupiscence to be all the strivings which presuppose *hubris*.

For Freud, the disruption of the original union between ego and the external world is entirely a matter of destiny, the fact of birth. The "turning away" which constitutes the "innermost character of sin" occurs when man refuses to accept the separated state. It is the tragic fate of man that he must leave the blissful peace of the intra-uterine state and fare forth into a world of shifting objects, of events whose issue is uncertain, that he must be subject to the iron laws of nature and prey to the anxieties of creatureliness, and that he must accept this tragic fate in loneliness with Stoic courage and resignation.

<sup>24</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47-8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>27</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>32</sup> *Loc. cit.*

. . . by being born we have made the step from an absolutely self-sufficient narcissism to the perception of a changing outer world and to the beginnings of the discovery of objects . . . we cannot endure the new state of things for long [and] periodically revert from it, in our sleep, to our former condition of absence of stimulation and avoidance of objects.<sup>33</sup>

Freud describes this secondary narcissism as a blanket denial or rejection of the categorical structure of finitude—space, time, causality, substance.

. . . hate originally betokens the relation of the ego to the alien external world with its flux of stimuli.<sup>34</sup>

The relation of hate to objects is older than that of love. It is derived from the primal repudiation by the narcissistic ego of the external world whence flows the stream of stimuli.<sup>35</sup>

Neurosis and psychosis are both of them an expression of the rebellion of the *id* against the outer world, of its "pain," unwillingness to adapt itself to necessity—to ananké, or, if one prefers, of its incapacity to do so.<sup>36</sup>

Freud says that when the psychoanalyst asks certain of his patients to renounce some particular pleasure, to make a sacrifice, or to resolve to "submit to a necessity which applies to all human beings, [he] will come upon individuals who resist such an appeal on special grounds. They say that they have renounced enough and suffered enough and have a claim to be spared any further exactions; they will submit no longer to disagreeable necessity, for they are *exceptions* and intend to remain so too."<sup>37</sup>

Freud states that this claim to be an exception is based upon some injustice that has been visited upon the individual by nature or by his fellow men—i.e., a deformity or accident or disease. He cites Shakespeare's account of Richard III as an ideal account, and interprets Richard's opening soliloquy as signifying: "Nature has done me a grievous wrong in denying me that beauty of form which wins human love. Life owes me a reparation for this, and I will see that I get it. I have a right to be an exception, to overstep those bounds by which others let themselves be circumscribed."<sup>38</sup> Freud then adds:

Richard is an enormously magnified representation of something we can all discover in ourselves. We all think we have reason to reproach nature and our destiny for congenital and infantile disadvantages; we all demand reparation for early

<sup>33</sup> Freud, S., *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Hogarth Press, 1948, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> Freud, S., *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, Hogarth Press, 1949, p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> Freud, S., *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, p. 279. In the two previous quotations the locus of rebellion is the ego, while in the last it is the *id*. The first two quotations are from a writing in 1915, prior to Freud's formulation of the "topography" of the psyche—ego, superego, *id*. The *id* takes the place of the "narcissistic ego" in this topography.

<sup>37</sup> Freud, S., *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, p. 320.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

wounds to our narcissism and self-love. Why did not nature give us the golden curls of Balder or the strength of Siegfried or the lofty brow of genius or the noble profile of aristocracy? Why were we born in a middle-class dwelling instead of a royal palace?<sup>39</sup>

Freud finds this same narcissism at the root of parental love for their children.

The child shall have things better than his parents; he shall not be subject to the necessities which they have recognized as dominating life. Illness, death, renunciation of enjoyment, restrictions on his own will, are not to touch him; the laws of nature, like those of society, are to be abrogated in his favor; he is really to be the centre and heart of creation, "His Majesty the Baby," as once we fancied ourselves to be. He is to fulfil those dreams and wishes of his parents which they never carried out, to become a great man and a hero in his father's stead, or to marry a prince as a tardy compensation to the mother. At the weakest point of all in the narcissistic position, the immortality of the ego, which is so relentlessly assailed by reality, security is achieved by fleeing to the child.<sup>40</sup>

*Hubris* also underlies the self-reproaches and the apparent humility that characterize persons suffering from melancholia.

. . . it is because everything derogatory that they say of themselves at bottom relates to someone else that they are not ashamed and do not hide their heads. Moreover, they are far from evincing towards those around them the attitude of humility and submission that alone would befit such worthless persons; on the contrary, they give a great deal of trouble, perpetually taking offence and behaving as if they had been treated with great injustice. All this is possible only because the reactions expressed in their behavior still proceed from an attitude of revolt, a mental constitution which by a certain process has become transformed into melancholic contrition.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the self-torment of the melancholiacs, like the corresponding phenomenon in obsessional neurosis, is a pleasurable gratification of sadistic, hate tendencies.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the sadistic impulses have not been completely turned in upon the self, for, ". . . in both disorders, the sufferers usually succeed in the end in taking revenge, by the circuitous path of self-punishment, on the original objects and in tormenting them by means of the illness, having developed the latter so as to avoid the necessity of openly expressing their hostility against the loved one."<sup>43</sup>

Freud finds this same *hubris* operating in religion which, indeed, is a collective obsessional neurosis. Religion seeks to perpetuate mankind's infantile delusion of omnipotence through its doctrine of the immortality

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 322-3.

<sup>40</sup> *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, pp. 48-9.

<sup>41</sup> *Collected Papers*, Vol. IV, pp. 158-9.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>43</sup> *Loc. cit.*

of the soul and through its conception of the external as being governed by a Supreme Will, analogous to the human will and susceptible to being influenced by man through religious acts.<sup>44</sup> This religious attitude Freud contrasts with the "scientific attitude," which alone is free from *hubris*. The scientific attitude resolutely rejects the ideas of immortality, of a Divine Providence that suspends the laws of nature in our behalf, and of any bond of love between man and Reality. "In the scientific attitude toward life, there is no longer any room for man's omnipotence; he has acknowledged his smallness and has submitted to death as to all other natural necessities in a spirit of resignation."<sup>45</sup> Freud cites with approval the later writings of Leonardo da Vinci which "breathe the spirit of resignation of the man who subjects himself to the laws of nature and expects no alleviation from the kindness or grace of God."<sup>46</sup>

If concupiscence is *hubris* in action, then Freud's accounts of the strivings based upon the "pleasure-principle," i.e., those of the id or the "narcissistic ego," and his account of the unsublimated libido and death-instinct would be the analogue to Tillich's account of concupiscence. In the next section we shall see how these strivings manifest themselves.

### III

In his account of the expression of the sinful or estranged state (the doctrine of evil), Tillich follows the ontology of Volume I of the *Systematic Theology*. He deals first with the destruction of the self-world correlation. Self-loss is "the first and basic mark of evil." It is "the disintegration of the centered self by disruptive drives which cannot be brought into unity."<sup>47</sup> And, to the degree that one's centered self disintegrates, one's world falls to pieces. "It ceases to be a meaningful whole. Things no longer speak to man; they lose their power to enter into a meaningful encounter with man. . . ." <sup>48</sup>

The self-loss and world-loss manifest themselves in the disruption and distortion of the ontological elements. Freedom, divorced from any meaningful relation to objects provided by destiny, becomes a merely arbitrary

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Freud, S., *The Future of An Illusion*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corp., 1949, pp. 26-42, 52, 84-6; *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 10-14, 21-3.

<sup>45</sup> Freud, S., "Totem and Taboo," *Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, Modern Library, 1938, p. 375.

<sup>46</sup> Freud, S., *Leonardo da Vinci: A Psycho-sexual Study of An Infantile Reminiscence*. New York, 1916, p. 106.

<sup>47</sup> *Systematic Theology* II, p. 61.

<sup>48</sup> *Loc. cit.*

appropriation of objects.<sup>49</sup> And to the degree that freedom becomes arbitrariness, the arbitrary acts prove "to be conditioned by internal compulsions and external causes. Parts of the self overtake the center and determine it. . . ." <sup>50</sup> Destiny becomes mechanical necessity.

Man's thrust toward transcendence of the given (dynamics) is distorted into a formless urge, while the given structure of the self (form), through which alone creativity is possible, becomes an externally imposed law, and the individual oscillates between slavish legalism and blind rebellion. Man's essential solitude (individualization) becomes existential loneliness. Man is shut off from communion (participation) with nature and fellow man. At the same time, he falls under the power of objects which depersonalize him, so that he becomes "a mere object among objects . . . part of a physically calculable whole, thus becoming thoroughly calculable himself."<sup>51</sup> And he may be driven to submergence in the "collective."<sup>52</sup>

In the condition of estrangement, the categories of finitude become symbols of annihilation or nonbeing. Separated from the eternal, man is given over to the experience of "having to die." Time becomes "mere transitoriness without actual presence";<sup>53</sup> space, the expression of man's homelessness; and causality and substance, the expressions of man's contingency, his lack of rootedness.

For Freud, self-loss appears in the fragmentation of the self into superego, ego, and id. Ideally the three "parts" of the psyche constitute a unified whole under the control of the ego.<sup>54</sup> But in most actual cases, the superego and id act as independent powers, and the ego's power of personal decision is greatly restricted. World-loss—the absence of any meaningful destiny—appears in Freud's idea that there is no purpose to human life except that of seeking happiness. Of this pursuit after happiness, Freud says: "There are two sides to this striving, a positive and a negative; it aims on the one hand at eliminating pain and discomfort, on the other at the experience of intense pleasures."<sup>55</sup> This pleasure-principle "dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the very beginning . . . and yet its programme is in conflict with the whole world, with the macrocosm

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>50</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> Freud, S., *The Problem of Anxiety*, pp. 29-30, and *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>55</sup> *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 27.



as much as with the microcosm."<sup>56</sup> Meaningless suffering is the lot of man. In Freud's words:

. . . goaded on by the id, hemmed in by the superego, and rebuffed by reality, the ego struggles to cope with its economic task of reducing the forces and influences which work in it and upon it to some kind of harmony; and we may well understand how it is that we so often cannot repress the cry: "Life is not easy." When the ego is forced to acknowledge its weakness, it breaks out into anxiety: reality anxiety in the face of the external world, moral anxiety in the face of the superego, and neurotic anxiety in the face of the strength of the passions in the id.<sup>57</sup>

The "lack of meaningful objects presented by destiny" and the arbitrariness of object-choice appear in Freud's analysis of the ways in which men seek happiness. The instincts blindly seek satisfaction. And satisfaction consists not in the establishment of a meaningful relation to objects, but either in the discharge of accumulated aggression or sexual tension or in the perpetuation or re-establishment of narcissism. But direct pursuit of instinctual aims leads to an excess of pain over pleasure. Therefore, man must resort to various substitute-aims, among which Freud cites art, religion, intoxication, neurosis, and scientific work. In all cases, the object upon which the libidinal or aggressive cathexis is directed is merely an outlet, a means to an end. At the same time, these apparently arbitrary object-choices are determined by childhood complexes and libidinal fixations. Every man marries the image of his mother; every woman, her father. The voyeur becomes a research scientist, the anal-erotic becomes a sculptor. The aesthetic pleasure one derives from, say, a given work of art is due not to any spiritual meaning which the art work conveys, but to the fact that it symbolizes the genitalia or wish to defecate, or some other primitive urge.

Dynamics without form appears in Freud's description of the id:

" . . . a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement . . . it has no organization and no unified will, only an impulsion to obtain satisfaction for the instinctual needs, in accordance with the pleasure-principle."<sup>58</sup>

The element of form appears in the superego, which enforces the cultural taboos and which is also the bearer of certain universal human restraints (man's "archaic heritage"). The superego appears as an alien, external force, and in certain neuroses man oscillates between giving in to the id and to the superego, between rebellious acts and guilt-ridden inhibitions.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>57</sup> *New Introductory Lectures*, p. 104.

<sup>58</sup> *New Introductory Lectures*, p. 99.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Freud's analysis of "moral masochism." *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, pp. 262-8.

The element of existential loneliness appears with greatest clarity in Freud's analysis of the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

. . . Why should we do this? What good is it to us? Above all, how can we do such a thing? How could it possibly be done? . . . If I love someone, he must be worthy of it in some way or another. (I am leaving out of account now the use he may be to me, as well as his possible significance to me as a sexual object . . .). He will be worthy of it if he is so like me in important respects that I can love myself in him; worthy of it if he is so much more perfect than I that I can love my ideal of myself in him . . .<sup>60</sup>

Freud goes on:

Not merely is this stranger on the whole not worthy of love, but, to be honest, I must confess he has more claim to my hostility, even to my hatred. He does not seem to have the least trace of love for me, does not show me the slightest consideration. If it will do him any good, he has no hesitation in injuring me, never even asking himself whether the amount of advantage he gains by it bears any proportion to the amount of wrong done to me.<sup>61</sup>

The ties of "friendship" that bind men are but "reaction-formations" brought about by the superego and reinforced by identifications (i.e., loving one's self or one's ideal of one's self in another) and aim-inhibited sexual impulses (so-called "Platonic love"). The only real love, in the sense of communion, is found, if even there, in the love of a mother for her male child.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, despite this all-pervasive egoism, man has a need to submerge his individuality. He fulfills this need by participating in a faceless horde under the domination of a strong and ruthless leader,<sup>63</sup> thus falling prey to a depersonalizing collective even while remaining in existential loneliness.

The final factor in Tillich's account of the expressions of the estranged state, the transformation of the categories of finitude into symbols of annihilation or nonbeing, has already been illustrated in connection with Freud's treatment of narcissism. Much additional material can be found in Freud's analysis of anxiety. In his explicit analysis of anxiety, however, Freud almost never transcends his nominalist, reductionist psychological assumptions. Anxiety is a reaction to specific physical threats. There is no generalized anxiety. Anxiety of Fate and death anxiety are reducible to

<sup>60</sup> *Civilization and Its Discontents*, p. 81.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89. But in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 54n, Freud says this love is "based on narcissism" and is "reinforced by a rudimentary attempt at sexual object-choice."

<sup>63</sup> *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, pp. 21-2, 81-100.

castration anxiety, and even castration anxiety itself develops only because "castration becomes, as it were, imaginable through the daily experience of parting with the contents of the bowel and through the loss of the mother's breast which is experienced in weaning."<sup>64</sup>

But Freud himself admits that his theoretical explanation of anxiety has been most unsatisfactory,<sup>65</sup> and the reader who is not bound by Freud's theoretical presuppositions will see the various "separation-traumas" that Freud describes (birth, weaning, castration) as symbolic expressions of man's categorical encounter with nonbeing. The birth trauma expresses the experience of transitoriness and of the loss of one's home or space. Castration anxiety is the great symbol of loss of substance. Freud himself indirectly acknowledges the symbolic role of the penis, in holding that it is not the biological significance of the penis but its value to the ego (the "high narcissistic cathexis of the penis") that makes it so important psychologically.

#### IV

I hope the preceding pages have shown how Freud's psychological analyses reinforce at many points Tillich's analysis of estrangement. Perhaps they have also shown how Freud is a corrective to Tillich. In his insight into the manifestations of *hubris*, Freud, it seems to me, is clearly more Christian than Tillich. Tillich, particularly in *The Courage to Be*, but also in his other writings, does not give an adequate account of the concrete workings of *hubris*. He recognizes *hubris* on the ontological level, but often seems unable adequately to describe its psychological and moral manifestations. When he descends from the ontological plane, Tillich seems to abandon Christian psychology for that of Karen Horney. Freud's discerning analysis of the egoism, pride, and arrogance that underlie the facade of humility and self-depreciation seems more in the stream of Christian psychology.

<sup>64</sup> *The Problem of Anxiety*, p. 87.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 120.

# The Role of Law and Moral Principles in Christian Ethics

E. CLINTON GARDNER

IN VIEW OF THE WIDESPREAD reaction against law and moral principles in contemporary discussions of Christian social ethics, it is important that the role of such laws and principles be reappraised. The relevance of, and the demand for, such a re-examination of this issue is indicated by the growing number of interpretations of Christian ethics as essentially a contextual ethic and the frequent failure to assign moral laws and principles any significant place. A justifiable anti-legalism frequently results in an unjustifiable antinomianism. Emphasis is frequently centered so exclusively upon the uniqueness of each ethical situation that an effort is made to approach it *de novo* with insufficient attention being given to the universal character of the relationships involved.

This tendency to reject all moral law and principles is, of course, not a new one. Some of Paul's followers interpreted his attack upon legalism as a rejection of the moral tradition of Judaism. If men are justified by faith instead of by works, they argued, then works are not essential and men are free to do as they desire. But this clearly was not Paul's intent any more than it had been Jesus' intent in his criticism of the legalism of the Pharisees. For just as Jesus had declared that he had not come to "abolish" but "to fulfill" the law and the prophets, and that "till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-18, RSV), so Paul declared that the moral law of Judaism was summed up in the one requirement of neighbor-love and that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:8-10). Paul's point was that Christians possess the Spirit and therefore do willingly from love that which men had previously felt constrained to do out of fear.

Similarly, many of Luther's followers have been so strongly influenced by his emphasis upon "the liberty of the Christian man" that they have either minimized or ignored the importance which he attached both to the

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moral laws of the Old Testament and to the secular laws of society. Luther believed, for example, that the law of the Old Testament, especially the Ten Commandments, was good and necessary in that it taught men what they ought to do and thus helped them recognize their own inability to do good.<sup>1</sup> Only when men are thus brought to despair of their own ability to do the good through the preaching of the Law are they in a position to hear and receive the word of grace proclaimed in the Gospel. Once men respond to this word with faith in the righteousness and goodness of God they receive the ability to keep the commandments, and they keep them henceforth out of gratitude and love.<sup>2</sup>

But Luther's emphasis upon justification by "faith alone, without works," coupled with the dualism between his personal and social ethics, encouraged many of his followers to falsify the freedom of the Christian man both by neglecting the place of law in the continual instructing of the believer, who is at the same time "justified and sinful," and by neglecting the importance of works as a fruit of vital faith. Luther's ethical dualism led him to restrict the Christian ethic largely to the believer's inner life—to good motives—and to his personal relationships with other individuals, thus leaving the secular institutions largely autonomous. The Christian was indeed to follow Christ in his relationships to the secular order, but this meant primarily that the believer was to obey the secular authorities as ordained by God and necessary for social order. Luther failed to see the implications of the love commandment for the transformation of secular institutions so that they might more effectively minister to the needs of the neighbor as a work of love.

### I. THE DANGER OF CONTEXTUALISM IN ETHICS

There is a similar reaction against law and moral principles in many contemporary discussions of the nature of Christian ethics. Professor Paul L. Lehmann, for example, defines Christian ethics as "*koinonia* ethics."<sup>3</sup> By this he means that it is "from and in the *koinonia*," or Christian fellowship of the Church, that the will of God is recognized as the norm of Christian behavior and also that one gets a clue as to what the will of God is. The Christian ethic is "always concrete and contextual," beginning with the concrete facts involved in a specific "ethical situation" rather than with "absolute" moral laws or principles. Similarly, Christian ethics is "indic-

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915. Vol. 11, pp. 347, 354.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> Lehmann, Paul L., "The Foundation and Pattern of Christian Behavior," in *Christian Faith and Social Action*, ed. by John A. Hutchison. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, p. 102.

ative" rather than "imperative;" it gives "primary attention to what is" rather than to what ought to be.

In seeking to answer the question of what the will of God is in a specific situation, Christian ethics "has tended to fall between two stools," Lehmann declares. Viewing love either on the one hand as a statement, a precept, or a law, or on the other hand as an attitude of benevolence, sympathy, or mutuality, it has wound up making practical decisions either on a purely pragmatic basis or on the basis of "some value system in which Christian love has a difficult time eking out a discrete existence."<sup>4</sup> *Koinonia* ethics, however, is able to avoid both of these pitfalls "by spelling out the meaning of love in terms of what God is doing and has done in the world." Within the *koinonia* love is seen to be "God's concrete action in Christ establishing a bridgehead of forgiveness in the world," and the aim of the Christian is to extend this bridgehead until all that is opposed to the divine will is "brought into the orbit of God's reconciling action in Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup> Thus, a *koinonia* ethic speaks of the will of God as "forgiveness and justice and reconciliation, rather than as love"; for these represent "the concrete reality of love in the *koinonia* in the world."

As a protest against legalism and as a reminder that Christian love gets its meaning from the *agape* of God revealed most fully in Christ, Lehmann's emphasis upon the contextual character of Christian ethics is a valid one. But Professor Lehmann fails to do justice to the normative character of the love commandments. It is true that the Christian's understanding of *agape* is based primarily upon the action of God in Christ and in the *koinonia*, but it is also true that the divine indicative of God's action constitutes a "divine imperative" for man, showing him how he ought to respond to God's activity. Recognition of this fact is implied in the acknowledgement that Christ is Lord. Through his *agape* for man God claims man for his love—i.e., for participation in the Kingdom of God in which love is universal and unlimited. In the words of Emil Brunner, "The revelation which makes it plain that the will of God is lavish in giving to man makes it equally clear that His will makes a demand on man. His will for us also means that He wants something from us. He claims us for His love. This is His Command . . . it is the command of One who gives before He demands, and who only demands something from us in the act of giving Himself to us."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> Brunner, E., *The Divine Imperative*, The Macmillan Company, 1942, p. 116.



Lehmann also limits God's activity far too exclusively to his redemptive work of forgiveness and reconciliation. He fails to do justice to the revelation of God's love in Creation and in Judgment—in the orders of creation and in the judgments of God in history. To be sure, he speaks of "justice" as the crucial problem of Christian behavior, but he defines justice almost exclusively in negative terms. Justice involves the breaking down of the existent patterns of social organization and the building up of new patterns. "God's justice (righteousness) is being concretely applied in the world in which God's will is being done, whenever and wherever the exalted are brought low, and those of low degree are exalted."<sup>7</sup> But surely there is some justice in the world, and simply to break down and overthrow existing structures of power and existing cultural and social patterns would bring injustice as well as invite chaos. Doubtless some structures are so evil that they should be overthrown radically, but in other cases the cause of justice would be best served by the transformation or conversion of the existing structures so that the good in them would be preserved while the evil is being purged away.

Finally, Lehmann limits the revelation of God's will too sharply to the Christian fellowship, and for this reason his ethic, like Paul's, is largely an ethic for the fellowship. It fails to provide adequately for the co-operation of Christians with non-Christians in meeting the problems and issues which confront all men in common. Far more attention needs to be given to an analysis of the nature of man as a moral being and to the significance of natural revelation. The final norm for the Christian is the *agape* of God in Christ, but the *agape* of God in Christ is fully disclosed only in the context of the more general revelation of God's will in Scripture, in sacred and in "secular" history and in other faiths. Ultimately, of course, each individual must make the final decision as to what God's will for him in a specific ethical situation is, no matter how much guidance one may get from the *koinonia*; and it is worth noting in passing that, although one may not begin with precepts and laws, one can really be aided by the *koinonia* in his effort to discover God's will for himself only in so far as the experience and witness of the *koinonia* is generalized in terms of precepts or principles which can be applied to new situations. Such formulations of the demands of love are indeed "abstract," and they fail to do justice to the diversity and complexity of particular concrete situations; but they are useful in much the same way that any other kind of generalization is useful.

<sup>7</sup> Lehmann, P. L., *op. cit.*, p. 113.

Another representative of the contextual, or situational, approach to Christian ethics is Professor Albert T. Rasmussen. In his *Christian Social Ethics*<sup>8</sup> he relies heavily upon the analysis of Professor Lehmann. Following the latter, Rasmussen characterizes the Christian ethic as "contextual and concrete" and he likewise contends that it is "indicative rather than imperative." But Rasmussen also draws upon the insights of a number of other contemporary interpreters of Christian ethics whose views cannot be so precisely equated with Lehmann's and his own. Specifically, he identifies his own interpretation with the positions of Paul Lehmann, Alexander Miller, Daniel D. Williams, James Gustafson, and H. Richard Niebuhr.<sup>9</sup> In actuality Rasmussen modifies and supplements Lehmann's position by drawing upon Miller's concepts of "covenant ethics," "a community of loyalty," and "the mores of the Kingdom of God."<sup>10</sup> Thus Rasmussen speaks of the Christian ethic as "an ethic of a community" rather than as a "koinonia ethic." He emphasizes more strongly than Lehmann the fact that love is "rigorous and demanding in its ethical requirements"<sup>11</sup> and also the fact that the Christian ethic is absolute in character. In both of these latter emphases as well as in his concern with the existential character of this ethic as a *commitment* in faith, Rasmussen shows the influence of H. Richard Niebuhr. The resulting interpretation thus differs in several important respects from Paul Lehmann's, as it does also from the positions of Daniel D. Williams, James Gustafson, and H. Richard Niebuhr.

In dividing contemporary discussions of Christian social ethics into two groups, Rasmussen distorts the current reaction against law.<sup>12</sup> The implication is that every Christian ethicist is either a contextualist or a legalist. Moreover, by his failure to deal seriously with the group which begins the ethical inquiry upon the basis of laws or principles rather than upon the basis of an analysis of the concrete ethical situation, he leaves the impression that there is little strength or value in the former position, which, incidentally, he associates only with John Bennett.

Professor James Gustafson has presented his position in the form of

<sup>8</sup> Rasmussen, A. T., *Christian Social Ethics*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Miller has developed his view in *The Renewal of Man*, Doubleday & Company, 1955. D. D. Williams has developed his in *God's Grace and Man's Hope*, Harper & Brothers, 1949. H. R. Niebuhr has indicated important aspects of his position in *Christ and Culture*, Harper & Brothers, 1951, and in his essay, "The Center of Value" in *Moral Principles of Action*, ed. by Ruth Nanda Anshen, Harper & Brothers, 1952. Niebuhr has not as yet, however, stated his position in print in a comprehensive and systematic form.

<sup>10</sup> Miller, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>11</sup> Rasmussen, A. T., *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

an essay entitled "Christian Ethics and Social Policy," appearing in *Faith and Ethics*.<sup>13</sup> Gustafson seeks to interpret Christian social ethics in the light of the basic motifs of Niebuhr's thought. There are, he believes, four such motifs which are fundamental: the relativism of life in faith, existentialist personalism, response, and the sense of flux and process in experience. The first of these, Gustafson suggests, is perhaps the central one, and the other three are derivative from it. The relativism of faith means that God alone is absolute and all other things are relative to him and derive their value from their relationship to him. It is this "relativism," or, more accurately, this "relationalism," which provides the basis of the Christian's freedom in responding to the One God who is active in all events.<sup>14</sup>

Employing these motifs in his analysis of ethics from a theological perspective, Gustafson develops the view that Christian social ethics is analytical instead of prescriptive, relational rather than abstract, and contextual rather than deductive. While he holds that "the 'indicative' takes priority over the 'imperative,'" he does not make the dichotomy between these two as sharp as does Rasmussen. And, significantly, he speaks of values as being "relational" rather than "objectively relative." Like Rasmussen, Gustafson recognizes the "significant effect of values and principles" in the analysis of the concrete situation.<sup>15</sup> Both see that the moral agent inevitably comes to each particular situation with some abstract understanding of values and principles. It is quite true, as Gustafson points out, that the opposing parties in a labor dispute, for example, do not first of all agree on a definition of justice, or the good society, and then deliberate about the implications of these definitions in the current dispute. But it is also true, as Gustafson acknowledges, that conceptions of justice and the good society are involved in such discussions. Clearly these concepts must be related dynamically to each particular situation, but they are nonetheless indispensable as guides in any effort to resolve the conflicts of interest involved in such disputes. Indeed, some recognition of their validity is presupposed in all efforts to resolve such conflicts on any basis other than self-interest or power. This fact is recognized by both Rasmussen and Gustafson, but its significance is obscured by their emphasis upon the

<sup>13</sup> Ramsey, Paul, ed., *Faith and Ethics: The Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr*, Harper & Brothers, 1957, Chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup> As Paul Ramsey points out, Niebuhr uses the term "objective relativism" to make clear that values are objectively related to structures and organic needs instead of being abstract essences which have an autonomous existence. This expression seems, however, to entail an unintentional prejudice against their objectivity. Hence, Ramsey suggests the term "relational objectivism" as a more adequate designation of Niebuhr's position. *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 152.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127. Cf. A. T. Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

uniqueness of each situation and their failure to consider the ontological meaning of justice.

Finally, one misses in Professor Gustafson's analysis of Christian social ethics any reference to the specific ethical teachings of Jesus such as those recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. These particular sayings provide part of the data for any theological understanding of Christian ethics; and, while they are not to be applied as new laws, they cannot be ignored any more than they can be dismissed simply as hyperboles or as an "interim ethic." They provide an important part of the context in which Christians seek to discover the divine will today just as they have always formed an inescapable part of this context throughout Christian history.<sup>16</sup>

## II. THE DIALECTIC OF LOVE AND LAW

The value of the reaction in many quarters against law is that it warns Christians against the dangers of ethical legalism. Among these dangers are the negative and restrictive character of legalistic morality, the fact that it stifles individuality and creativity, its tendency to fall into externalism, and its inability to secure obedience.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the contextual ethicists to whom we have referred have performed an important service in emphasizing the close relationship between faith and ethics, in calling attention to the complexity of the moral situation and the moral aspects of economic, political, and social relationships, and in emphasizing the dynamic character of God's action and continuing revelation as well as the dynamic character of human relationships and human needs. None of these insights, however, necessitates the denial of an important place for laws and moral principles in the ethical life.

Notwithstanding the values implicit in the contemporary reaction against moral laws and principles, its dangers must not be obscured. Among these are its tendency to lead to an excessive individualism; its tendency to ignore the need which all men, including Christians, have (because of their finiteness and their sinfulness) for the guidance which is provided by moral laws and rational ethical principles; and its tendency to restrict the contribution of Christian faith in the area of social ethics to the provision

<sup>16</sup> Georgia Harkness makes a similar criticism of Emil Brunner in her *Christian Ethics*, Abingdon Press, 1957, p. 29. Miss Harkness defines Christian ethics primarily in terms of the effort to apply the ethical insights of Jesus to the problems and decisions of men in the present day. While this method is inadequate for the reasons which we have already indicated, it provides an important corrective to Brunner's silence in this regard.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Thomas, G. F., *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, pp. 128-129.

of a disposition of responsible concern for the neighbor.<sup>18</sup> A right "disposition" is essential, but it is not enough to assure ethical responsibility. Some conception of the essential nature of man as well as some guidance in the form of general patterns for dealing with particular kinds of historical and cultural situations is also needed. That the fundamental elements in an adequate understanding of the essential nature and true end of man are given in Christian faith is implicit in the historical and revelatory character of the Christian religion. The content and implications of the revelation which has taken place in the past needs to be made clear. Similarly the revelation which continues to take place in our day needs to be identified, interpreted, and made available to those individuals who are being urged to act responsibly in the situations in which they are involved.

In their reaction against legalism contextual ethicists generally make the dichotomy between love and law too sharp. The Christian who is wholeheartedly intent upon doing the divine will needs guidance in discovering what *agape* demands in a particular situation where he is faced with a whole series of obligations and with the necessity of deciding which values ought to be sacrificed in the effort to realize other values. While each person is different from all other persons and while the uniqueness of each is cherished in Christianity as being grounded in the creative will of God, it is also true that the "nature of man is universal and permanent in its primary characteristics."<sup>19</sup> By creation every normal person has certain needs and capacities, and these in turn constitute the basis of his claims upon his fellows. Moreover, man is social by nature, and he has many relationships to other individuals and to groups with whom he exists in community. These relationships in turn are the basis of his obligations or duties to his fellowmen. It is because of the similarities in the needs of all men and in the relationships which exist among men that moral laws and ethical principles have arisen to crystallize the wisdom gleaned from the experience of the race as to how these needs can best be fulfilled and what the duties implied in these relationships are. The knowledge of such rules plays an essential role in the moral training of children and in the deepening of the ethical understanding and discipline of adults. This is true both in the case of Christian moral training and discipline and also in the case of the ethical training and discipline that seeks to give practical expression to every other religion and secular faith.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Pitcher, Alvin, "A New Era in Protestant Social Ethics?" in *The Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 1 (February, 1958), p. 10. See also David Little, "Principalities and Powers and the Christian Ethic," in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol. XIII, No. 1 (March, 1958), p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas, G. F., *op. cit.*, p. 130.

But since our primary concern in the present discussion is with the reaction against law in Christian ethics, let us examine more closely the function of law in relation to Christian faith and practice. According to Brunner, the biblical commandments such as those contained in the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount serve a threefold function. In the first place, they serve a disciplinary function, regulating our lives in accordance with certain minimal standards. This is especially true of the Decalogue as compared with the Sermon on the Mount, for example, for the former provides an order of community life in a way in which the latter does not. In the second place (and this applies even more strikingly to the Sermon on the Mount than it does to the commandments of the Old Testament) the law has a judgmental value, leading men to repentance and humility by revealing to them the depth of their sin. And, in the third place, it provides guidance in the effort to discover the will of God.

To take an example which Brunner uses, the Seventh Commandment—"You shall not commit adultery"—performs a disciplinary function by prescribing an order of life for the community. Such discipline is necessary for the believer as well as for the nonbeliever, for "even the believer is always also an unbeliever." This commandment also leads men to repentance, however, when its meaning is taken radically as Jesus took it when he applied it to a lustful glance. Thus the believer is forced to recognize that even in the honorable civil state of marriage, with the blessings of the Church, he stands before God as an adulterer and that he too like the less respectable people of ill repute must rely ultimately upon the forgiveness of God. Finally, the Seventh Commandment, interpreted in this radical way in the light of the love commandment of the Sermon on the Mount, becomes an instruction to the believer as to how he ought to live if he would be truly a child of his Heavenly Father. When recognition of the value of moral laws is coupled with recognition of their limitations, it becomes clear that any adequate analysis of Christian ethics must provide a place for rules and principles as well as a standard for the judgment of such laws and a more adequate motivation for fulfilling them. Viewed in this light, the relation of moral laws to the command to love the neighbor is best understood as a dialectical one.

Neither the law of the Bible, whether of the Old Testament or the New, nor that of those systems of ethics which are based upon the biblical law and codes is in its literal form the will of God. Such law and codes are not the "Divine imperative," or the "Divine command," but they point



men to the present will of God. "Without the Law, in this radical and at the same time dialectical sense it is impossible to hear the real command of God."<sup>20</sup> But, no matter how necessary the law may be as an instrument to aid in hearing the divine command, the divine command itself is heard only in faith, when the law is transcended and the will of God is freshly discerned in a particular situation. From this vantage point alone—that is, from the vantage point of faith when the intent of the law has been "fulfilled" and transcended, when the law has itself become internalized and its fragmentary character has been overcome by being related to whole persons in whole situations—does the inadequacy of the law as a legalism become fully apparent. The divine command is addressed to a whole person who stands in a whole cluster of relationships and in a situation that is unique. Not just one law but many laws give direction, but only love understood as the will of God to create, govern, and redeem man can integrate these fragmentary laws and be truly responsible before God for the neighbor. The Christian uses many laws and principles in his effort to discover God's will in a concrete situation, but he can never be content to treat any neighbor simply as another "case," and he can never assume that he can tell in advance precisely what love will require when the next *similar* situation arises. Love remains sovereign over all other moral rules and laws, but love uses these freely as directives or guides.

Implicit in the place which we have given to laws and principles in Christian ethics is the recognition of the obligation of Christians to formulate what they have learned in their wrestling with new problems or with old problems in new settings in terms of guiding principles or general rules which they can apply themselves and which they can recommend to others who are in earnest about relating their faith to daily life. There is a great need that the gap between theory and practice should be bridged, and one of the essential steps in this process seems to be the disciplined, patient, and realistic wrestling with the practical implications of faith and love for specific areas of human relationships and for ways of meeting the specific needs of our neighbors under specific types of circumstances. For example, what guidance can Christians offer the lawmaker or the doctor or the teacher or the engineer or the lawyer or the businessman or the nurse or the housewife that will help each better to understand what love demands in the pursuit of one's daily activities in each of these occupations in mid-twentieth-century America? Or what guidance can dedicated Christians, sharing their

<sup>20</sup> Brunner, E., *op. cit.*, p. 147.

moral insights and technical skills, offer to each other with regard to what love demands in the facing of problems of segregation and integration, or economic exploitation, or the need to bring about political reform?

One of the major contributions of Professor John C. Bennett to contemporary Christian social ethics has been his insistence upon the need for such an application of Christian ethics to social policy through the formulation of a series of moral judgments which become increasingly tentative but which offer increasingly immediate guidance for action.<sup>21</sup> Thus, there is need in the first place for the formulation of "guiding principles" about which there is no disagreement (e.g., the equal dignity of all men before God). Beyond these there is need for "middle axioms" (e.g., the removal of all segregation within the churches). Finally, Christians need to seek mutual guidance concerning the next specific steps which should be taken in a particular situation (e.g., steps leading to the abolition of segregation in a particular denomination or the overcoming of racial exclusiveness in local congregations). The demand for such specific guidance in the effort to apply Christian love to concrete situations is daily becoming more and more urgent as the need for more and more specialized knowledge becomes increasingly pressing and as the recognition that our social problems have an ethical and theological dimension becomes more and more widespread.

### III. CONCLUSION

As the result of the foregoing analysis of the place of law and principles in Christian ethics, we are led to conclude, in the first place, that love (*agape*) is itself both a law and a gift. It partakes of the character of law in that it places an unconditional demand upon man, but it also partakes of the character of a gift in that man knows that he is loved before it is required of him that he shall love and also in that he must know himself to be loved with *agape* before he is able to love his neighbor with *agape* rather than with *eros*. Love may thus be spoken of as a law or a command although it is above all other moral laws. It is unconditional or absolute in the sense that there are no exceptions to it, and hence it is unlike all other "absolute" laws and principles. It is related to the needs of the neighbor in every specific situation, but it is not therefore relativistic. As Paul Tillich writes:

You *can* express it as a law, you can say as Jesus and the apostles did: "Thou shalt love"; but in doing so you know that it is a paradoxical way of speaking, indicating that the ultimate principle of ethics, which, on the one hand, is an unconditional command, is, on the other hand, the power breaking through all

<sup>21</sup> Bennett, J. C., *Christian Ethics and Social Policy*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946, Chapter IV.

commands. . . . Love alone can transform itself according to the concrete demands of every individual and social situation without losing its eternity and dignity and unconditional validity. Love can adapt itself to every phase of a changing world.<sup>22</sup>

And, in the second place, we are led to conclude that while sets of moral laws such as those found in the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount or the disciplines of churches or statements of policy adopted by groups of devoted Christians cannot tell one ahead of time and without question what he ought to do, they do point one in the "general direction" which he ought to go, and in this sense they offer indispensable guidance for conduct. They are of the highest significance in the effort to discover what the will of God is, but they are nevertheless subordinate to love.

Finally, moral laws and traditions undergo a profound change when they are used in faith in the service of love.<sup>23</sup> The believer no longer follows them out of fear. Instead of being burdensome requirements upon man they become cherished guides to joyful obedience to God whose will the man of faith wants to do out of love. As H. Richard Niebuhr, true to the insight of Paul, declares, the recognition on man's part of the omnipotence and goodness of God "changes the bondage to men and their traditions into a bondage to God."<sup>24</sup> With this change there comes "a great *conversion* of the power, spirit and content of the law."<sup>25</sup> Men know it to be God's requirement which is based upon his goodness and mercy and sovereignty. Man's relationship to God rather than to the law becomes the primary relationship. The law itself takes on the character of "counsel," and bondage to the law is transformed into the freedom of sonship. The isolated demands of manifold laws and principles are brought together and harmonized by love which relates them dynamically to each new ethical situation and "fulfills" their intent by creatively ministering to the neighbor's need as this is freshly discerned in its individual as well as in its universal aspects.

<sup>22</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Protestant Era*, The University of Chicago Press, 1948, p. 155.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Brunner, E., *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150. Cf. also Paul Ramsey's essay, "The Transformation of Ethics" in *Faith and Ethics*; but contrast the chapter in his earlier *Basic Christian Ethics*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950: "Christian Liberty: An Ethic Without Rules."

<sup>24</sup> Niebuhr, H. R., "Evangelical and Protestant Ethics," in Elmer J. F. Arndt, ed., *The Heritage of the Reformation*, Richard R. Smith, 1950, p. 226.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* Italics added.

# Religion and the Arts

## Christ and Carl Sandburg

HENRY E. KOLBE

CARL SANDBURG at eighty is not only a great author and artist. He has become a living symbol of the land and the age in which he lives. His historical writings, notably his works on Lincoln, and his poems have made him the most authentic literary voice of twentieth-century America.

On the dust jacket of his *Collected Poems*<sup>1</sup> there is a statement from Irita Van Doren, editor of the *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*: "Always he has written poetry, even when he called it history or biography or fiction." And in his poetry, Sandburg has caught the feel of America as no one else, not even Walt Whitman, has ever done. Whitman, it is true, reflected the mood of lusty expansionist America in the middle of the nineteenth century in a manner unmatched by any of his contemporaries. The last years of his life, however, were spent in the semi-retirement of invalidism, whereas Sandburg has continued to be active well beyond the Scriptural threescore and ten. While Whitman's creative period spanned hardly more than two decades, Sandburg's first volume of *Chicago Poems*

<sup>1</sup> New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950.

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appeared in 1916, and more than four decades later he is still actively at work, as his active participation in the 125th anniversary of the founding of Chicago in 1957, together with his lectures and writings since, bears abundant witness.

Further, Sandburg is the poet of *America* in a manner which is true of no other poet of our time. Vachel Lindsay has never caught the imagination of the people in the manner of Sandburg. The rhythm of Lindsay's poems is haunting but it is not the rhythm of the country. Robert Frost is rather the poet of New England than of the nation, and he has not received the popular reception which has made Sandburg "one of the people" in so distinctive a manner.

For Carl Sandburg "sings America," to borrow a phrase from Whitman—the America of the twentieth century, America come of age. In his hundreds of poems, short and long, early and late, there are caught up the voices and echoes of our time, the words that portray not merely the sounds but also the sights and even the smells and the indefinable feelings of the age in which he lives.

Here are the clanging of Chicago streetcars, the roar of factories, the hissing of hot steel poured forth from a tapped furnace at Gary, the noise of the factory gate at quitting time, the rude language and the dull pain of the poor and the slum-dweller. Here too are the concerns for people, especially the common people, and the strong hatred of cant and hypocrisy, especially that which parades in religious dress—the concern and the hatred which reveal not only the soul of the poet but of the religious and spiritually sensitive man as well.

All of this is part of the familiar story of Carl Sandburg. This is the Sandburg that every one knows. What is perhaps not so familiar is that a strong current of explicitly religious feeling and expression runs throughout his poems—from the earliest ones in the 1916 volume to the previously unpublished ones included in the final section of the *Complete Poems* of 1950. There are direct references or indubitable allusions to religious themes on more than two hundred of the 676 pages of the *Complete Poems*. Many of these references or allusions or words are, as may be expected, of small significance. The name of God or of Christ appears a few times as expletive. Occasionally biblical or other religious allusions are used almost casually to illustrate a particular point. Far more often, however, the explicitly religious passages in the poems are at once profoundly moving and spiritually penetrating.

Nor will this be surprising to those who have read Sandburg's auto-

biographical account of his early years in *Always the Young Strangers*.<sup>2</sup> For here he writes that "one of the most vivid" memories of his early life was that of hearing his father read from a "small Swedish-language Bible" on Sunday afternoons.

Certain words I had heard my father read stayed with me, *Gud* meaning "God," or *evangelium* meaning "gospel." I asked my mother to point out those words for me so my eyes would know how spoken words look when fastened down in black on white paper. She put her finger on those words and I had a dim beginning of learning to read, a hazy understanding.<sup>2</sup>

This incident, which apparently took place about Sandburg's fourth year, indicates how deep-rooted is his sense of religion and of God. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that there is a fundamentally religious tone to many of his poems—a deep sense of God, a particularly warm and sensitive awareness of Jesus Christ, a hatred of injustice which has strong overtones of the Hebrew prophets, a probing after answers to the long questions of man's destiny and the meaning of human history.

This does not mean, however, that Sandburg is a theological poet after the same fashion as T. S. Eliot, Gerard Manley Hopkins, or W. H. Auden. For Sandburg does not theologize: he describes, and in his descriptions there are manifested the strong feelings of those whom he describes, whether they be others or himself. He does not argue nor persuade. He does not seek to point the reader toward God nor to moralize about an abstract good. He seeks neither to preach nor to teach. He is neither prophet nor pedagogue but, as in his journalistic days, basically a reporter.

If in fact Sandburg may be said to point the reader toward anything at all, it is simply to the world around him, with its people and their feelings and desires and dreams and cares and hopes. But the poet knows that these people live not simply in relation to their neighbors and their physical environment but in relation to God as well. His native sensitivity to the wholeness of the human person repeatedly brings to explicit expression this Godward aspect of man's experience.

Sandburg's concern for quite ordinary people and for equally ordinary run-of-the-street experience is manifested in his constant emphasis on what has been aptly called "the little picture"—frequently the single, often inconspicuous, person of the crowded sections of the city. This, in turn, is tied up with his thought of God. Indeed, as one reads Sandburg's poems, one is rather naturally drawn to think that in them he is revealing his own awareness of Jesus' concern for the poor and the outcast and the downcast

<sup>2</sup> Sandburg, C., *Always the Young Strangers*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952-55, p. 59.



of his own time. This is not, of course, to make a messianic claim for the poet. It is simply to record what is there to be seen and felt. And, in view of Sandburg's own early religious training in the little Swedish Lutheran church at Galesburg, it is surely not too much to expect that his understanding of Jesus should have played a large part in his own concerns for those "little ones" among whom Christ himself found his own most friendly reception. For Jesus, too, we ought never to forget, was a poet!

#### SANDBURG'S PICTURES OF JESUS

The references to Christ in Sandburg's poems are, on the affirmative side, such as to suggest not merely the admiration of the poet for the poetic spirit of Jesus. Rather they manifest the authentic devoutness which is reverence mingled with love. The other side of this, the negative aspect, is the hot anger which flames out in denunciation of those who would reduce the living words and the vital sensitivities of Jesus to dead and deadening religious cant, who would turn his prophetic and dynamic teachings and the inspiration of his nobility of spirit into an opiate. Here the sensitivity of the poet and the strength of the prophet combine to pour out the rage which is the obverse of reverence.

First, let us see some of the affirmative aspects of Sandburg's treatment of Christ. Here we turn to his warm and loving poem about Christ at twelve, entitled simply "Child." The poet's picture does not fit in with historic church tradition, it is true, but rather it identifies Christ with the basic beauty and naturalness and grace of all children and, by quite warrantable extension, to all that is "divinely human" in man:

The young child, Christ, is straight and wise  
And asks questions of the old men, questions  
Found under running water for all children  
And found under shadows thrown on still waters  
By tall trees looking downward, old and gnarled.  
Found to the eyes of children alone, untold,  
Singing a low song in the loneliness.  
And the young child, Christ, goes on asking  
And the old men answer nothing and only know love  
For the young child, Christ, straight and wise.<sup>3</sup>

The same sensitive tenderness is revealed in many other poems. It is suggested in the way in which the poet takes note of small details: In the window of "Jabowsky's (pawnshop) on a side street" in Chicago he

<sup>3</sup> "Child," p. 59.

Page numbers following quotations from poems refer to *Complete Poems*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950.

notices "a porcelain crucifix with the glaze nicked where the left elbow of Jesus is represented."<sup>4</sup> He records a sentence written by "a pauper"

To a patch of purple asters at a whitewashed wall:  
 "Let every man be his own Jesus—that's enough."<sup>5</sup>

In "Brass Keys" the poet draws a picture of joy

... weaving two violet petals for a coat lapel . . .  
 painting on a slab of night sky a Christ face . . .  
 slipping new brass keys into rusty iron locks and  
 shouldering till at last the door gives and we are in  
 a new room . . . forever and ever violet petals, slabs,  
 the Christ face, brass keys and new rooms . . .<sup>6</sup>

Here human love, devoutness, hope, and courage are met together to fill out the poet's conception of what joy means to men. And, quite characteristically, this joy is centered around the image of Christ.

The warmth and naturalness of Sandburg's thought of Jesus is revealed in a brief poem, "Epistle," which reflects clearly the thought of Christ in the Synoptic Gospels:

Jesus loved the sunsets on Galilee.  
 Jesus loved the fishing boats forming silhouettes  
 against the sunsets on Galilee.  
 Jesus loved the fishermen on the fishing boats forming  
 silhouettes against the sunsets on Galilee.  
 When Jesus said: Good-by, good-by, I will come again:  
 Jesus meant that good-by for the sunsets, the fishing boats,  
 the fishermen, the silhouettes all and any against the  
 sunsets on Galilee: the good-by and the promise meant  
 all or nothing.<sup>7</sup>

His sensitive appreciation for the genuine and simple faith of the poor is indicated in the sympathetic and even joyous tone of the little poem "Washerwoman":

The washerwoman is a member of the Salvation Army.  
 And over the tub of suds rubbing underwear clean  
 She sings that Jesus will wash her sins away  
 And the red wrongs she has done God and man  
 Shall be white as driven snow.  
 Rubbing underwear she sings of the Last Great Washday.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Three Balls," p. 119.

<sup>5</sup> "The Windy City," p. 277.

<sup>6</sup> "Brass Keys," p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> "Epistle," p. 401.

<sup>8</sup> "Washerwoman," p. 105.

There is exquisite and almost infinite tenderness in the way the poet writes of a bit of carved ivory in "Loin Cloth"—a tenderness which beyond doubt reflects Sandburg's identification of himself with the carver in his faith and devotion. How else can one interpret this little poem—a poem which is a literary match for the artistry of the carving which calls it forth?

Body of Jesus taken down from the cross  
 Carved in ivory by a lover of Christ,  
 It is a child's handful you are here,  
 The breadth of a man's finger,  
 And this ivory loin cloth  
 Speaks an interspersal in the day's work,  
 The carver's prayer and whim  
 And Christ-love.<sup>9</sup>

Sandburg's own concerns for the common people are explicitly related to his thought of Christ, as indicated in the following passage from the long poem, "The People, Yes," in which there is unmistakably a reflection of the poet's awareness of Jesus' concern for the common people—an awareness which accurately catches the spirit of Jesus himself as he ministered to the multitudes who listened gladly to him in the days of his flesh. There is strong implicit judgment here too, reminiscent of the wrath of Jesus himself against those who in his day exploited the poor for gain.

These others, you may have read, are "the great unwashed," "the hoi polloi," they are indicated with gestures:  
 "The rabble," "the peepul," "the mob with its herd instinct in its wild stampede," "the irresponsible ragtag and bobtail"—  
 Can they also be the multitude fed by a miracle on loaves and fishes, les misérables in a pit, in a policed abyss of want?  
 Was it this same miscellany heard the Sermon on the Mount, the Gettysburg Speech, the Armistice Day news when confetti dotted the window-sills and white paper blew in snowdrifts on the city streets?<sup>10</sup>

#### POEMS OF WRATH AND INDIGNATION

There is, however, another side to Sandburg's poems about Christ. There is not simply tenderness and love and sympathy, but there is also the rage which is the negative counterpart of reverence. The lover of Christ is the hater of pious and empty cant.

Something of this anger is suggested in "Jaws," written at the outbreak of the first world war and reflecting the poet's judgment upon men and

<sup>9</sup> "Loin Cloth," p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> "The People, Yes," p. 587.

nations which refused to heed the words of him whom they all looked to as Savior and Lord:

Seven nations stood with their hands on the jaws of death.  
 It was the first week in August, Nineteen Hundred Fourteen.  
 I was listening, you were listening, the whole world was listening.  
 And all of us heard a Voice murmuring:  
     "I am the way and the light,  
     He that believeth on me  
     Shall not perish  
     But shall have everlasting life."  
 Seven nations listening heard the Voice and answered:  
     "O Hell!"  
 The jaws of death began clicking and they go on clicking:  
     "O Hell!"<sup>11</sup>

The fires of the poet's anger burn perhaps more hotly in the bitter protest of the depression period of the mid-thirties. For this economic debacle was rooted in, and brought to explicit manifestation, a lack of basic human sympathy and concern—of what in the New Testament is called love. The poet's protest against brutalization and hypocrisy is well revealed in this passage from "The People, Yes":

When violence is hired  
 and murder is paid for  
 and tear gas, clubs, automatics,  
 and blam blam machine guns  
 join in the hoarse mandate,  
 "Get the hell out of here,"  
 why then reserve a Sabbath  
 and call it a holiness day  
 for the mention of Jesus Christ  
 and why drag in the old quote  
 "Thou shalt love thy neighbor  
     as thyself"?<sup>12</sup>

In the light of the tenderness with which he himself deals with Jesus and the sympathy which he manifests toward those whose faith bears the seal of reality, it is not to be wondered at that what is probably Sandburg's angriest poem should have been written in denunciation of one whom he felt to abuse the spirit of Jesus while making free and frequent use of his name. Often the poet's protests against injustice are expressed in irony, but there is no subtlety of literary device in his attack on the revivalist preacher in the poem, "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter."

<sup>11</sup> "Jaws," p. 41.

<sup>12</sup> "The People, Yes," p. 602.

It would be difficult to match the feeling of prophetic rage which this poem manifests against the evangelist's exploitation of Christ. The poet's rage runs at white heat because of the double betrayal which he senses—the betrayal of Christ by one ostensibly preaching for him, and of the people whom Jesus loved and for whom he poured out his own very life.

You tell people living in shanties Jesus is going to fix it up all right with them by giving them mansions in the skies after they're dead and the worms have eaten 'em.

You tell \$6 a week department store girls all they need is Jesus; you take a steel trust wop, dead without having lived, gray and shrunken at forty years of age, and you tell him to look at Jesus on the cross and he'll be all right.

This poem, on the other hand, is not simply a powerful denunciation. It is at the same time a powerful affirmation of what Carl Sandburg himself thinks of Christ, as the vivid contrasts between the evangelist and Jesus make abundantly clear:

Jesus had a way of talking soft and outside of a few bankers and higher-ups among the con men of Jerusalem everybody liked to have this Jesus around because he never made any fake passes and everything he said went and he helped the sick and gave the people hope.

I've been to this suburb of Jerusalem they call Golgotha, where they nailed Him, and I know if the story is straight it was real blood ran from His hands and the nail-holes, and it was real blood spurted in red drops where the spear of the Roman soldier rammed in between the ribs of this Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE ETERNAL CHRIST

Nor is it simply what religious scholars term "the historical Jesus" which is the object of Sandburg's attention. The sense of "the eternal Christ" is present, too, to illuminate and intensify the significance of the man of Galilee. There is no use of the technical theological word, but the idea of incarnation is frequently suggested.

In the following passage from "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," the poet records his musings on riding muleback out of the Grand Canyon. The God of the beauty and grandeur of nature—even the majestic awesome beauty and grandeur of the great Canyon itself—is not adequate to satisfy the needs of the spirit of man. In an obvious allusion to Jesus, Sandburg gives expression to his feelings on the necessity of incarnation:

<sup>13</sup> "To a Contemporary Bunkshooter," pp. 29-30.

If God is a proud and a cunning Bricklayer,  
 Or if God is a King in a white gold Heaven,  
 Or if God is a Boss and a Watchman always watching,  
 I come riding the old ride of the humiliation,  
 Straddling a jackass, singing a song,  
 Letting out hallelujahs.

Before a ten mile float  
 of auburn, gold, and purple,  
 footprints on a sunset airpath haze,

I ask:

How can I taste with my tongue a tongueless God?  
 How can I touch with my fingers a fingerless God?  
 How can I hear with my ears an earless God?  
 Or smell of a God gone noseless long ago?  
 Or look on a God who never needs eyes for looking? <sup>14</sup>

Every one who has stood on the rim of the Grand Canyon can testify to the awesomeness of the spectacle, the sense of religious hush which overcomes the soul and lays the finger of the heart upon the lips. Sandburg has caught the spirit of this experience in a fragment recording a conversation with a Spanish Indian at Yavapai Point:

Steps on steps lift on into the sky; the lengths count up into stairways; let me go up for the Redeemer is up there; He died for me; so a Spanish Indian was speaking—and he asked, When the first French Jesuit looked from Yavapai four hundred years ago, did he murmur of a tall altar to go on a mile-long rock shelf down there on a mesa? did he whisper of an unspeakably tall altar there for the raising of the ostensorium and the swinging of censers and the calling up of the Heart of the Living Christ? And he went on, Where the Son of God is made known surely is a place for the removal of shoes and the renewal of feet for the journey—surely this is so.<sup>15</sup>

To this same period of Sandburg's writing there belongs a portion of another poem—the 1928 Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard, "Good Morning, America." Here, while one does not find—as one does not expect—the ecclesiastical dogma of redemption, one does find the mystic's sense of the reality and the presence of Christ in life, and especially in those dimensions of life where love is expressed, as it was at the crucifixion, in the pouring out of life for life:

There is a Sleepwalker  
 goes walking and talking—

Go alone and away from all books, go with your own heart into the storm  
 of human hearts and see if somewhere in that storm there are bleeding  
 hearts, sacred hearts taking a bitter wages of doom, red-soaked and  
 crimson-plunged hearts of the Redeemer of Men.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "Slabs of the Sunburnt West," p. 310.

<sup>15</sup> "Many Hats," pp. 433-434.

<sup>16</sup> "Good Morning, America," p. 333.



Something of this same sense of the identification of Christ with man is probably intended to be suggested in the poem entitled "Early Lynching." It is in keeping with Sandburg's trend of thought that the death of Jesus should be referred to as a lynching—not as something which Jesus himself deliberately chose, even though he would not flinch from it when it came. Nor was the death of Jesus foreordained of God, a thought which is doubtless repugnant to the poet's mind. Rather Jesus is the victim of human injustice, the same kind of injustice which injures and destroys man in today's world.

In this poem, however, Christ is not simply the man Jesus, in innocence suffering pain and death because of the wrongs of other men. Rather he is also those other men who are caught up—at least relatively innocent—in the matrix of events. Christ is in a mystic sense identified with the people who are being used by the foes of Jesus to further their own evil ends: the crowd who without knowing why are led to cry for his death; the workmen who fashion the cross and drive the nails through the hands of Jesus; the spectators who look on at the scene of tragedy unaware of the meaning of the events in which they thus participate.

There is in this poem, too, a strong note of irony of judgment. For the Christ who is hated and finally killed because of his concern for the poor and his denunciation of their oppressors is not only the man with "the smell of the slums . . . on him." He is also partaker in or inheritor of the eternity of the world of nature and of the God who is the creator of nature. It is this conception of the eternal Christ which leads the poet to the triumphant affirmation with which the poem closes.

Two Christs were at Golgotha.  
One took the vinegar, another looked on,  
One was on the cross, another in the mob,  
One had the nails in his hands, another the stiff  
fingers holding a hammer driving nails.  
There were many more Christs at Golgotha, many more  
thief pals, many many more in the mob howling the  
Judean equivalent of, "Kill Him! Kill Him!"  
The Christ they killed, the Christ they didn't kill,  
those were the two at Golgotha.

Pity, pity, the bones of these broken ankles.  
Pity, pity, the slimp of these broken wrists.  
The mother's arms are strong to the last.  
She holds him and counts the heart drips.

The smell of the slums was on him.  
 Wrongs of the slums lit his eyes.  
 Songs of the slums wove in his voice  
 The haters of the slums hated his slum heart.

The leaves of a mountain tree,  
 Leaves with a spinning star shook in them,  
 Rocks with a song of water, water, over them,  
 Hawks with an eye for death any time, any time,  
 The smell and the sway of these were on his sleeves,  
 were in his nostrils, his words.

The slum man they killed, the mountain man lives on.<sup>17</sup>

It is not without significance that immediately following this poem there is one titled "Plunger," which speaks of what Abraham Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion." While the name of Jesus does not appear in this poem, its very proximity to the other one makes it impossible to mistake the "plunger" to whom reference is made:

Empty the last drop.  
 Pour out the final clinging heartbeat.  
 Great losers look on and smile.  
 Great winners look on and smile.

Plunger!  
 Take a long breath and let yourself go.<sup>18</sup>

The sense of the ever-living Christ is reflected again in "Precious Moments," which speaks of the poet's conception of the living words which characterize true poetry and which he relates to "the living Word" in a theological sense:

Bright vocabularies are transient as rainbows.  
 Speech requires blood and air to make it.  
 Before the word comes off the end of the tongue,  
 While the diaphragm of flesh negotiates the word,  
 In the moment of doom when the word forms  
 It is born, alive, registering an imprint—  
 Afterward it is a mummy, a dry fact, done and gone.  
 The warning holds yet: Speak now or forever hold your peace.  
*Ecce homo* had meanings: Behold the Man! Look at him! Dying  
 he lives and speaks.<sup>19</sup>

The concern for incarnation in Sandburg's poems is manifest not only in the poems referring to Easter and its surrounding events. It is manifested,

<sup>17</sup> "Early Lynching," p. 395.

<sup>18</sup> "Plunger," p. 395.

<sup>19</sup> "Precious Moments," p. 428.

too, in the sense of wonder which emerges in two poems about Christmas. The first of these comes from the early period of his writing and is entitled "Rusty Crimson (Christmas Day, 1917)." In it the wonder of Christmas is brought down to date as the poet pictures Jesus as being born, not long ago in the stable at Bethlehem but today in Sandburg's own prairie state of Illinois:

The five-o'clock prairie sunset is a strong man going to sleep after a long  
day in a cornfield.

The red dust of a rusty crimson is fixed with two fingers of lavender.

A hook of smoke, a woman's nose in charcoal and . . . nothing.

The timberline turns in a cover of purple. A grain elevator humps a  
shoulder. One steel star whisks out a pointed fire. Moonlight comes  
on the stubble.

"Jesus in an Illinois barn early this morning, the baby Jesus . . . in  
flannels . . ." <sup>20</sup>

In the final collection within the *Complete Poems*—those previously unpublished—there is another poem, "Special Starlight," which manifests both profound understanding of the meaning of Christmas and sensitive appreciation for what must forever be one of the basic meanings of incarnation. Apart from the direct quotations from the Bible, this poem does not make use of established religious language or symbolism. It does, however, point clearly to a meaning of Christmas which is all too often overlooked—the new sanctifying of all life because the Son of God has shared it.

The Creator of night and of birth  
was the Maker of the stars.

Shall we look up now at stars in Winter  
And call them always sweeter friends  
Because this story of a Mother and a Child  
Never is told with the stars left out?

Is it a Holy Night now when a child issues  
Out of the dark and the unknown  
Into the starlight?

Down a Winter evening sky  
when a woman hovers  
between two great doorways,  
between entry and exit,  
between pain to be laughed at,

<sup>20</sup> "Rusty Crimson," pp. 257-258.

joy to be wept over—  
 do the silver-white lines  
 then come from holy stars?  
 shall the Newcomer, the Newborn,  
 be given soft flannels,  
 swaddling-cloths called Holy?

Shall all wanderers over the earth, all homeless ones,  
 All against whom doors are shut and words spoken—  
 Shall these find the earth less strange tonight?  
 Shall they hear news, a whisper in the night wind?  
 "A Child is born." "The meek shall inherit the earth."

"And they crucified Him . . . they spat upon Him.  
 And He rose from the dead."

Shall a quiet dome of stars high over  
 Make signs and a friendly language  
 Among all nations?

Shall they yet gather with no clenched fists at all,  
 And look into each other's faces and see eye to eye,  
 And find ever new testaments of man as a sojourner  
 And a toiler and a brother of fresh understandings?

Shall there be now always  
 believers and more believers  
 of sunset and moonrise,  
 of moonset and dawn,  
 of wheeling numbers of stars,  
 and wheels within wheels?

Shall plain habitations off the well-known roads  
 Count now for a little more than they used to?

Shall plain ways and people held close to earth  
 Be reckoned among things to be written about?  
 Shall tumult, grandeur, fanfare, panoply, prepared loud noises  
 Stand equal to a quiet heart, thoughts, vast dreams  
 Of men conquering the earth by conquering themselves?  
 Is there time for ancient genius of man  
 To be set for comparison with the latest generations?  
 Is there a time for stripping to simple, childish questions?

On a Holy Night we may say:  
 The Creator of night and of birth  
 was the Maker of the stars.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "Special Starlight," pp. 666-668.

In this poem, with its manifestation of the poet's own deep and sensitive devotion, we have a fitting signature to Carl Sandburg's portrayal of Jesus Christ and his meaning for the life of man.

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ED. NOTE: Our publication of this article comes soon after the poet's eighty-first birthday, and after his noteworthy address on Lincoln to the joint session of Congress. We have Mr. Sandburg's permission to quote from a letter he wrote Dr. Kolbe after reading the manuscript of the present article.

"I have had many citations in my days and times but this of yours is about the most deeply moving I have ever known. Had my Mother lived till now she would weep in a strange gladness over what you write. When in Chicago in May I shall hope to be seeing you if only to speak a quiet and humble God-bless to you.

"Ever yours,

"Carl Sandburg."

# The Revelation of God Through Jesus Christ

R. H. W. SHEPHERD

ONE OF THE GAINS of our modern time is the clearness with which we are perceiving that God has never left himself without witness, that the revelation of the Eternal has been in all times and among all peoples. The modern serious study of comparative religion has had at least two grand results: (1) It has shown that God has made himself known in some measure to every race of men. "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world have been clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead"; all peoples indeed have had the law written in their hearts. We have gotten hold of that fact today as never before. (2) Another gain is an added respect for every form of faith in which men have expressed the revelation of God that has come to them. The day is past, for example, when the task of the Christian missionary was conceived as being first the destruction of everything in the faith of a primitive people and then a beginning *de novo*. In every aboriginal heart there are to be found truths whispered first, it may be, long ages back by the Divine Spirit. These whisperings can be silenced only at peril. It is not for the Christian missionary to still these voices, but to give them opportunity to become more audible.

When we come to study the unique revelation given to us through the Hebrews and culminating in a blaze of glory in Jesus, it is with no mean thought in our minds concerning other faiths. Hinduism, among other things, holds and teaches the great truth of the immanence of God in human life. It is something to be thankful for that through it untold millions have lived and died knowing that God is not far from every one of us. Buddhism again has performed a memorable service, in a world where men cling to perishing material things, by declaring the transitoriness of this passing

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show, that the seen is only for the moment, that the unseen is eternal. We may well give thanks that Confucianism has impressed on countless hearts the sacredness of all human relationships, the reality of the bonds that bind us to the life of the past and all the life that is to be. Mohammedanism has made a memorable contribution to the world's life in that it has so consistently declared the sovereignty of God. And the faith of the peoples of Central and Southern Africa has kept them close to the world of the spirit, has encircled their daily life with an invisible realm.

There is good to be found in all these and other historical expressions of faith. But in Jesus we have all these gathered into one, and more than these as supplement. The immanence of God in human life is the great word of Hinduism, but Hinduism never stressed it more than did he who declared that the Kingdom of God is within us. And Jesus added to it a truth that Hinduism failed to stress—the holiness of the immanent One. Buddhism did not emphasize more the transitoriness of this passing show than did he who taught us to lay up treasure not upon earth but in heaven. And Jesus added to it the complementary truth, lacking in Buddhism, that despite the transitoriness of life here, this world is the sphere where we are to do the will of God and attain to character. Confucianism sanctified our human relationships, but not more than did he who for thirty years remained the inmate of an earthly home and who even in the agonies of crucifixion thought of the needs of his widowed mother. And Jesus added the truth, so dimly perceived by Confucius, that there is a life with its own relationships lying behind the veil of sense. Mohammedanism told the world in a mighty voice that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, but Jesus was as emphatic, and he made the truth dear to our hearts because he showed this Almighty One to be our Father. The faith of the Bantu has kept the hearts of multitudes close to the spiritual, but Jesus has brought the spiritual realm quite as near and has bereft that realm of fear and filled it with love: he has given not the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Before we pass from the thought of the comprehensiveness of Jesus there is a matter to be mentioned, but on which I can only touch. We must accept this comprehensive Man of Nazareth in a comprehensive way. In regard to his teaching, for example, it is not permissible to receive his sublime sayings about the brotherhood of man while we give no heed to his insistence on love as the guiding principle of life. If we acclaim him as a "socialist" on the strength of his championship of the poor, it will

not do to throw away his oft-repeated teachings about the value and necessity of a life of prayer and communion with the Father.

Moreover, we cannot separate him and his work. One thing we can never do with Jesus is to divide what he did from what he was. "You can get all the enrichment of a play like Hamlet," it has been said, "though you know nothing about William Shakespeare. You can learn the wonders of modern astronomy, and the interactions of the solar system, though you live in an ignorance as deep as midnight of the life story of Copernicus." The importance of Jesus, however, lies not merely in his teaching, but in his personality. It was through the latter that he blessed the world even more. What Jesus taught, he was; he embodied and did not merely enunciate the truth. "The Christian Gospel is not a teaching merely, or a philosophy merely, or a morality merely; it is the Gospel of a Person." (Dr. J. D. Jones.) There can be no Christianity without Christ. Jesus insists upon himself. You must take him, and take him as he stands, in all his rounded completeness.

No one can study the life of Jesus without marveling at his absolute certainty of God. He did not argue concerning the existence of God. He lived on intimate terms with him. God was to him a fact of immediate, hourly experience and so needed no proof. God was so near and real that Jesus wondered that men showed so little faith in him, and that when they did profess belief that belief influenced so little the ordering of their lives.

Then, along with a meekness and humility so winsome that they lifted up these qualities to the rank of virtues, we find him making the most stupendous claims; affirming no less than that he is the central Person in human history. He claimed to be the Son of God in a unique and special sense. But he claimed also to be the Son of Man holding a special relation to every other member of the human race. He is with the prisoner in his cell, the sufferer in his sickness, the poor man in his dismal room. In dealing with their fellows, however weak or insignificant, men are really dealing with him and by their attitude to him their destiny is fixed. He claimed further that he was the key unlocking a unique revelation of God. "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him."

Such claims can be judged only in the light of the evidence of his teaching and his life. Therefore we may now ask, what are some of the features of the revelation of God that Christ gave us? We shall look first at his teaching and then at himself.

## I. CHRIST'S TEACHING

A distinctive feature of the revelation of God that Christ gave us is his portrayal of God as Father. In the ancient world, God as Jesus revealed him was unknown. "There is no such thing as love to God," said Aristotle three hundred years before Christ, and his was a typical viewpoint: "it is absurd to speak of anything of the kind, for God is an unknowable being."

Into the midst of these and similar ideas concerning God prevalent in the ancient world, Jesus stepped, and he overturned many of the old conceptions. And he did it, as almost all great things are done, in the simplest manner, by looking up to heaven and saying, "Father." (Scholars seem agreed that the first form of the Lord's Prayer opened only with "Father.") Even among the Jews this sounded new and startling. It is true that sometimes men, and particularly Hebrew men, had thought of God as their Father, but only in the sense of their Creator as Father of the nation. No individual man had dared to look up and address the Almighty in that familiar way. But Jesus, in speaking to God, made this his common form of address and taught others to do the same. Throughout the Gospels you will find that Jesus in praying uses no other name but "Father," except on one occasion—in the mysterious cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And Jesus poured into the word "Father" all the richness of content it could hold.

Fatherhood implies love, and God's fatherhood implies God's love—God's love for all his children. Jesus lifted the veil and showed us the heart of the Eternal as a heart of generous self-giving love. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Again, in his exquisite picture of the father of the prodigal son Jesus gave a portrait of God, the Eternal Father, with love in his heart that never faileth.

Another aspect on which Jesus insisted was that the Fatherhood of God implied his care for individual men. The prevailing temper of the world has often been a doubt as to whether, in view of the myriad beings that walk the earth, God can possibly have an interest in individual lives. Jesus brushed that doubt aside. He would have none of it. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered," he said. And to enforce it further

he declared that not a bird fell out of the nest without God's knowing. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." It was but an echo of the teaching of Jesus when Kipling referred to the One

Who clears the grounding berg  
And guides the grinding floe,  
He hears the cry of the little kit fox  
And the lemming on the snow.

Along with the affirmation of love and individual care in the Father's heart, Jesus further taught the great lesson that God longs for fellowship with his sons and daughters. One of the most notable things in the message of Jesus was his declaration that God is seeking men, seeking to reveal himself to man and to have fellowship with man. In most other faiths the knowledge of God is conceived as coming through man's search for God. Man reaches truth about God by his own effort, by reasoning from the constitution of the natural world, the nature of his own heart, and the trend of history back to the Author and Sustainer of it all. "O that I knew where I might find him," man exclaims, and then seeks after God. But the truth, says Jesus, is the other way round. God is searching for man. God is going round the house of every man's life seeking to make himself known. He is knocking at every door, if perchance he may gain admittance.

In parable after parable Jesus represents God as the active one, out on a quest for man. Like every true father, God is not content with providing the means of life for his offspring, food and shelter and raiment. He desires above all, fellowship. Without that fellowship, life is incomplete—incomplete for man, and incomplete even for God. Herein, according to Jesus, is the supreme lesson of the Incarnation. He was sent to bring men into this fellowship. Man's value—each man's value—lies in this, that he is capable of entering into this fellowship, capable as nothing else known in creation is capable, of having communion with God. It is because of this that God cares more "for one human soul than for all the worlds that make their orderly pilgrimages across the awe-inspiring highways of immensity."<sup>1</sup>

Despite all that he said about the love of God and the Father's longing for fellowship, there is a severe strain that runs through Christ's thought of God and saves us from lax and light-hearted views of the Divine nature. Bishop Barnes has said: "I prefer to talk of the Fatherhood of God rather than of the love of God. There is a severe side to the character of God

<sup>1</sup> McKeehan, F. D., *The Patrimony of Life*, p. 68.

which the idea of Fatherhood retains." So many when they speak of God as love leave the impression of him as a kind of benevolent old gentleman, with whom we can be on very easy terms. Jesus gives no countenance to that thought.

The sense of the greatness and infinite power of God rests on all that Jesus says of Him. To Jesus, God was Lord of heaven and earth, the one supreme King and Ruler of all things, before whom all secrets are open. To Jesus it was almost incredible that men should use the name of God so lightly, should take it on their lips to support their trivial oaths, or use it carelessly as a pretext to excuse neglected duty.<sup>2</sup>

"Our Father, which art in heaven." Is that phrase, "which art in heaven," something merely tacked on? Far from it. It reminds us that God stands for all that is great and holy. It makes a call upon our reverence, for the phrase refers not primarily to place but to state, to condition.

Coupled with the love of God, in Christ's thought, is his majesty; joined to his affection there is his holiness. He is a Father with a moral purpose and under the influence of that purpose he seeks our purest good. What kind of father is it that does most for us? Is it the doting, easygoing, indulgent father—one who will never frown upon us when we do evil, who will never set us to hard tasks? No. We end by not respecting that kind of father. The parent who does most for us is the one whose love we can never doubt, who rejoices in any success or happiness that comes to us more than we do ourselves, who would sacrifice his dearest possession if we would benefit by it; yet who, because of the strength of his mind and the purity of his soul, never lets us forget that he is our father, whom we always revere, who for our good chooses for us the hard way and has strength enough to see us walk it even when our feet are bleeding and our eyes shed tears, who keeps us ever mindful that right is right and wrong is wrong and that nothing can wash out that eternal distinction. That is the kind of Father that God is: loving but pure, tender but stern, kindly but exacting. Holy and reverend is, and must ever be, his name.

## II. HIS LIFE

Jesus did not merely enunciate the truth about God; he embodied it. He did not merely declare it; he lived it. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," he boldly declared. Many modern teachers insist on lessons being given with an object before the eyes of the class. With reverence we may say it, this was the Divine method.

<sup>2</sup> Moulton, W. J., *The Certainty of God*, S. C. M. Press, 1923, p. 14.

And so the Word had breath and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds,  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought.<sup>3</sup>

In the teaching of Jesus we saw love as the master key to the heart of God. But we may say that what convinced men most of the love of God was not the word of Christ but the life of Christ. From the cradle at Bethlehem to the cross at Calvary, though in lowliest guise, it was one mighty pageantry of loving devotion to men. In the central Figure of the Gospels we have the supreme example of the man of tender feeling. The Evangelists lay bare the heart of Jesus so that we see him ever and anon moved with compassion and we come to know how he lived from a great "depth of being." And with this depth and tenderness there accompanied a width of sympathy and affection that embraced within their scope all humankind: Roman, Greek, Samaritan, Canaanite, Jew; rich, poor, learned, ignorant, sickly, healthy, fallen, saintly, all found in him a Friend and Lover.

Like the love of the Father, his love embraced all humankind. In this he was an enigma to the men of his own nation; they could not understand, for example, his interest in alien men. "Will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" they asked in mockery. In the meeting of Jesus and his contemporaries over the alien question we can see the flash of arms and catch the sound of battle. Jewish ethics, even at their highest, recognized a wide gulf as lying between the man of Hebrew race and him who could claim no kinship with Israel. When the law, reaching its sublimest height, declared: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbour, and not bear sin because of him; thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," the word "neighbour" might be read with different meanings according to the wealth or poverty of a man's soul. To the ordinary Jew it meant "compatriot"; to Jesus, "fellow mortal." The clash between Jesus and his fellow countrymen came in this, that a human form need not be Jewish ere the Savior's heart was touched and his hand stretched out in aid: it was enough that it was human.

Perhaps as astonishing as anything else was Jesus' constant insistence that his own life of service was but a reflection of the delight with which

<sup>3</sup> Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 36.



God serves his creatures. One of the greatest and most lovable figures of the ancient world declared proudly, "I am no man's servant." Christ said to the twelve humble men whom he had gathered about him, "I am among you as he that serveth." He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. In all the history of religion there is perhaps no more significant scene than that described in the words: "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." The career of Jesus was one of ceaseless activity and effort on behalf of others, and he declared that this was part of the life of the Father. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

The career of Christ has been examined as with the finest and most revealing of microscopes and it has come out from the process not blurred or besmirched, but enhanced in purity and fairness. The story of his doings was penned by the Gospel writers with the utmost artlessness, but though they wrote with no striving for effect, the effect has been overwhelming in its portrayal of a character unmatched in goodness amongst the sons of men. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?", Jesus asked his detractors, and the question rings down the ages. "We are brought face to face with one who stands apart from all the rest of us because He has no consciousness of sin. His words search our hearts; He brings us to our knees confessing that we are sinful men; He so deepens the sense of duty that all our complacency is swept away, and yet with calm and unfaltering step he walked through life with his conscience unstained."<sup>4</sup>

It must be emphasized that with all Christ's purity it was no mere negative virtue he set forth. Jesus often took an unexpected road, but it was always positively right. His life was not only harmless and undefiled; it was rich in all the virile qualities that go to make up ideal manhood. He was free from softness although on fire with love. Perhaps this is brought home to us best when we consider his attitude to the wrongs done to others.

A distorted view of the Savior has gone abroad, a view that represents him as ever dispassionate and mild-eyed. The conception is dishonoring. Jesus on not a few occasions displayed hot-blooded ire, anger that was as sheer lightning, swift, decisive, shattering. When the ruler of the

<sup>4</sup> Moulton, W. J., *op. cit.*, p. 23.



synagogue, for example, protested against the healing of the bent woman on the Sabbath, Jesus lashed him with passionate invective. In such scenes, and they are not uncommon in the New Testament, you find that Jesus is always fighting the battles of others. It is this unselfish passion for the good of others, this burning indignation at others' wrongs, combined with the most fitting utterance, that gives the denunciations of Jesus their tremendous force and lifts them to the sublimest level. Very commonly the expression of anger is pitiable and reveals the weakness of a man, but the wrath of Jesus in its justice, its selflessness, its loftiness of expression, revealed the sinews of his soul.

Yet with all his indignation at the wrongs inflicted on others he was supremely indifferent to the wrong inflicted on himself. Every indignity that can be heaped on a man appears to have befallen the Savior. No one was ever less concerned for the body and more for the spirit than Jesus, yet he was called a gluttonous man and a winebibber. He was intensely devoted to his own stock, but they branded him a "Samaritan"—their most odious appellation. No spirit ever had so intimate communion with the Father and offered so many and authentic proofs of it, but he was called a devil. Reverence for God and the things of God was the keynote of his life, but men dubbed him a blasphemer. The wisest of the centuries since have agreed that his wisdom was unmatched, but his own relatives declared openly that they thought him mad. The deepest insults of being called a liar, slapped in the face, spat upon and crucified naked in a public place, were all visited upon Jesus. But in face of every taunt and injury we listen in vain for the word of enmity falling from his lips. Frequently when affronted he maintained an unbroken silence; at times he dropped a simple word of expostulation contradicting some untruth; but most often he uttered some kindly saying or did some kindly deed to those who were guilty of the wrong.

Do we marvel that he came to a cross? Plato said of the ideal man that he would be scourged, racked, fettered, would have his eyes burnt out, and at last, after suffering every kind of torture, would be crucified. Plato saw that as the natural result of a life of surpassing faithfulness. It was the lot of Jesus; his death was of one piece with the sufferings of his life. But there was an element unforecast by Plato that stood out in the death of Jesus. Suffering love hanging on a cross, the philosopher foresaw. But the teaching and life of Jesus declared that Calvary meant the suffering love of God hanging on a cross. Calvary means that or it means nothing—

certainly nothing that is new. God was in Christ, seeking in Christ, loving in Christ, reconciling in Christ. At the cross God was in the midst of the world's suffering and sin, suffering with us, bearing our burden with us; yes, and suffering from us, bearing the burdens we lay upon his loving heart. That is the distinctive message of Christianity. And because he suffered and bore, he reconciled us to himself, as one always reconciles when one suffers in love the wrongs inflicted by another.

I do not wish to go into controversial theology, but I will say that the deadliest heresy—all the more deadly because it masquerades as orthodoxy—is that which represents Christ as dying to reconcile, appease, propitiate his Father and ours, as if God were a gigantic Shylock whose face was turned from humankind and his heart hot with anger until he could have his pound of flesh in the body of his Son. This parody of the atonement is hideous, pagan, God-dishonoring. The death of Christ does not mean Christ reconciling God to us, but, as the Scripture states it, God in Christ reconciling us unto himself.

As a good father suffers when his children are estranged from him, so God suffers when we break the family relationship, fling ourselves out of his home, and prefer the far country of our low desires. As a good father takes to himself the sins of his children, letting their crimes and disgrace meet in his heart like a sheaf of spears, so God makes the sins of the human family his own. By suffering thus and bearing thus, he wins us, for the most powerful force in the world is not merely love, but suffering love.

When we ponder these and other aspects of the life of Christ we cease to wonder that men came to believe in God because they believed in Christ. "We believe in God through Christ," says St. Peter. If we ask the Apostle John why he believed in God, he answers, "We have seen Jesus, have heard his voice, have handled him with our hands, and we know." One in our own modern time has declared the same thing when he says:

God made Himself known to us, so that we may recognise Him through a *fact*, on the strength of which we are able to believe on Him. . . . We Christians hold that we know only one fact in the whole world which can overcome every doubt of the reality of God, namely, the appearance of Jesus in history, the story of which has been preserved for us in the New Testament. Our certainty of God may be kindled by many other experiences, but has ultimately its firmest basis in the fact that within the realm of history to which we ourselves belong, we encounter the man Jesus as an undoubted reality.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> W. Hermann.

Indeed, as we company with Christ in thought it comes upon us that he stands alone, in incommunicable, solitary grandeur. It is not only that his teaching is unique but he himself is unique. One thing we can never do with Christ is to regard him as belonging to a class. You may talk of the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets and the noble army of martyrs, but over against all there stands alone the person of our Lord. In him we have an historic fact which is not only different in degree, but is absolutely different in kind from anything that the world has ever seen.

This fact has so impressed itself on the hearts of men that all through the ages worship has been deemed the most fitting attitude to Christ. From first to last, in the New Testament, Christ has been the object of adoring worship. With no tradition demanding it, the Apostles found themselves bowing at his feet.

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness  
with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,  
men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ  
crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame,  
in few years with few friends founded a world-empire  
wider than Alexander's and more enduring;  
since from his death it took its everlasting life.  
HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple  
not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man.<sup>6</sup>

And from the day of the Apostles on to the present, every believer in his holiest hours has carried all that he has found in Jesus into the heart of the eternal God. Seeking God's will, he has followed Christ's will; listening for God's voice, he has heard Christ's voice. The love revealed on the Cross is the love that dwells in the heart of God. Finally, by sheer force of spiritual impression, he has bowed down and worshiped at Christ's feet. It is very searching to realize that some of those outside the churches have this same feeling about Jesus. Mr. Middleton Murry in his *Life of Jesus* comes to this conclusion: "Keep we our heads as high as we can, they shall be bowed at last." And Mr. H. G. Wells sums up his picture of the Man of Nazareth by the confession, "He is too great for our small hearts."

<sup>6</sup> Bridges, Robert, *The Testament of Beauty*, 1928. Used by permission of The Clarendon Press, Oxford, England.

# Mary Magdalene in Scripture and Tradition

FRANCIS C. LIGHTBOURN

MARY MAGDALENE is a much maligned woman. Popular piety makes of her a reformed prostitute. This estimate rests upon a tradition established for Western Christendom by Gregory the Great (A.D. 540-604) and perpetuated by the present Roman liturgy. It is not, however, the tradition of Eastern Christendom, nor is it the generally held view of Protestant New Testament scholars. Moreover, even Roman Catholic scholars are beginning to reject it.

Yet at the popular level the tradition persists. The Bishop of Coventry is reported to have referred, in a public address on Good Friday 1957, to "women like Mary Magdalene, the harlot."<sup>1</sup> If a remark like this can pass in such circumstances, it is time once again to present the facts of the case—long known to specialists—and to come to the defence of a presumably innocent woman who, without any real evidence, has had her character besmirched throughout the centuries.<sup>2</sup>

But it is not merely to exonerate an individual, laudable though that may be, that one may properly come to the defence of Mary Magdalene. There are deeper reasons, if one must have them, for so doing; for the view that she was a prostitute is a prize example of mistaken exegesis—of how not to read the Bible. Indeed, one writer goes so far as to say: "Never, perhaps, has a figment so utterly baseless obtained so wide an acceptance as that which we connect with the name of the 'penitent Magdalene.'"<sup>3</sup>

There is rightly today much talk about biblical theology. But a theology of the Bible must be based on the Bible—on what Holy Scripture

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<sup>1</sup> *London Church Times*, April 26, 1957, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> On the other hand it is heartening to come across a recent novelist who understands the situation—Rose Macaulay, in *The Towers of Trebizond*, p. 195: "... Mary Magdalene (so unjustly defamed by posterity on no evidence). . ."

<sup>3</sup> Plumptre, E. H., in *Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III, p. 1815.

plainly and obviously says. If traditional Western exegesis is wrong on its estimate of Mary Magdalene, it may very well be wrong on other matters. Thus a study of the New Testament evidence regarding this woman may serve as an excellent example of the difference between the older and the more modern way of interpreting Holy Scripture.

What, then, are the facts of the case?

# I

The real question at issue is whether there are grounds for identifying Mary Magdalene, mentioned on several occasions in the Gospels, with the unnamed woman of Luke 7:36f "who was a sinner" (*hamartōlos*)—evidently a notorious sinner of some sort, and not unlikely a prostitute.<sup>4</sup>

How did this anonymous character come to be identified with Mary Magdalene?

A number of factors probably entered into the picture. First of all there was a not unnatural desire to identify the woman. Nature, we say, abhors a vacuum; and Bible readers abhor anonymity. If a character is unnamed the devout mind tends to look around and find some other individual with a name who could be fitted into the picture.

Given this itch to identify, the means of doing so in the present case are not far to seek. For, in chapter 8 of Luke's Gospel, immediately after the story of Jesus being anointed by this woman and the accompanying parable of the two debtors, occurs this passage:

Soon afterward he [i.e., Jesus] went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.<sup>5</sup>

This is the earliest point in the Gospel narrative at which Mary Magdalene is mentioned, and only in Luke's Gospel does she appear as early as this, for in none of the others does she turn up until the Passion Narrative.

Given the determination to pin a name on the woman of Luke 7:36f

<sup>4</sup> Of course it is not dead certain that the word has this specific meaning in this passage, but scholars who reject the identification of this woman with Mary Magdalene think that "harlot" is what Luke meant in his description of her. See, for example, Easton, B. S., *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, ad loc.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 8:1-3, Revised Standard Version. The King James Version's rendering of the concluding words ("which ministered unto *him* of their substance") is based upon a less reliable manuscript reading, and is in the direction of Christological interests.

"who was a sinner," that of Mary Magdalene occurring only a few verses beyond would be, as we say, "a natural"—especially as it is said of the former that her sins were "many" (Luke 7:47), and of the latter that "seven demons" had gone out of her. Though there is no necessary connection between demon possession (which covers broadly what we mean by mental illness) and moral depravity, one can readily see how in earlier times the two might have been confused.<sup>6</sup>

But there is a further consideration. In addition to Luke's story of an anointing, there is another story, told by Matthew, Mark,<sup>1</sup> and John, of an anointing of Jesus by a woman as he reclines at a banquet. In John's anointing story, which has significant parallels with Luke's, the woman—unnamed in all the other accounts—is Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, all three of whom appear earlier in John's Gospel in connection with the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-46).

Assuming, as pious imagination is wont to do, that the two occasions of anointing were the same (despite the fact that Luke's takes place earlier in Galilee and the other during the last week in Bethany, near Jerusalem), it would seem to follow, on the basis of John's *prima facie* evidence, that the woman "who was a sinner" of Luke 7:36f was Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus—even though we have no other indication that she was a woman of dubious character.

But if Luke's unnamed woman "who was a sinner" is Mary Magdalene (on the basis of Luke 8:1f), and if she is also Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus (on the basis of John 12:1f), then Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and the unnamed penitent are all one and the same individual. And this has been the tradition of Western Christendom from at least the time of Gregory the Great.

What does present day New Testament scholarship say about the matter?

## II

1. Scholars today start without any preconceived notion that the unnamed sinner of Luke 7:36f must be the same person as some one else known to us by name in the Gospels. The Bible is full of unnamed characters. There is no inherent reason why Jesus' earthly ministry should not have touched many a person whose name will forever remain unknown to us. Thus there is no reason why an unnamed woman should not have anointed him on the occasion recorded by Luke.

<sup>6</sup> This is precisely what Gregory the Great does. See the passage quoted below.

2. In the opening verses of the next chapter already quoted (Luke 8:1-3), Mary Magdalene is introduced as though she were a new character, not mentioned before. If Luke had wanted to identify her with the unnamed woman previously mentioned, he certainly chose an unusual way to do it; on the contrary he introduces her as someone entirely new.

3. There is no warrant for identifying the "many" sins of the unnamed woman of Luke 7 and the "seven" demons that are said to have gone out of Mary Magdalene, for, as we have seen, demon possession and immorality are quite distinct from one another.

4. Despite certain superficial resemblances, Luke's story of an anointing and Mark's (Matthew's is substantially the same) are, as they stand, quite different. In Luke's story the woman ("who was a sinner") anoints Jesus and his host taunts him with not being a prophet and knowing instinctively "who and what sort of woman" this is (7:39). In Mark's story a woman anoints Jesus by breaking over his head an expensive flask of ointment, and the criticism that ensues has to do not with the woman's character—for this does not enter into the discussion—but with whether the waste of this precious material, which "might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,"<sup>7</sup> was justified.

5. But different though these three stories in their present form are, they probably all go back to a single incident. The account of this will, then, at some point in the period of oral transmission, have bifurcated to produce the versions represented in Luke, on the one hand, and in Matthew, Mark, and John on the other. The central core would then, perhaps, be the fact that Jesus was anointed by a woman during a meal, and that this gave rise to some kind of argument among those present. According to one strand of the oral tradition, exception will have been taken to the woman's character (reflected in Luke's account); according to the other, to the waste involved (Matthew, Mark, and John).

But there is no ground for bringing Mary Magdalene into the picture, or for identifying her with Mary of Bethany, whose mention in John's account is rather obviously a late addition to the story. In the Gospels Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene are represented as distinct individuals, and neither of the two can with any show of reason be equated with the anonymous penitent of Luke 7:36f.

Yet the centuries-old tradition of Western Christendom has telescoped all three, regarding the unnamed sinful woman of Luke 7:36f, Mary of

<sup>7</sup> The denarius was worth about 20 cents.



Bethany, and Mary Magdalene as one and the same person. Says Gregory the Great, who—with naive arbitrariness—gave definitive form to this tradition:

This woman, whom Luke calls a sinner, and John names Mary, we believe indeed to be that Mary from whom, according to Mark's testimony, seven demons (*septem daemonia*) were cast out.<sup>8</sup> And what is meant by "seven demons" if not universal wickedness? For because all time is comprised in seven days, universality is rightly symbolized by the number seven. Therefore Mary had seven demons, since she was full of universal wickedness. But lo! because she faced the stains of her foulness, she ran to the fountain of mercy, to be washed—not even blushing at the assembled guests.<sup>9</sup>

It is this composite character that the Roman rite commemorates under the name "St. Mary Magdalene, Penitent," on July 22d, identifying "Mary Magdalene" in the collect with Mary of Bethany by reference to "her brother Lazarus," and in the Gospel for the day (Luke 7:36-50) with the unnamed woman "who was a sinner." There is thus no further notice taken in the Roman rite of Mary of Bethany, for as a separate individual she does not so much as exist! Her sister Martha, however, is commemorated on July 29th.

Quite different is the tradition of Eastern Christendom, which regards Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed penitent as three distinct persons, and so commemorates them liturgically.

### III

The traditional Western identification of Mary Magdalene with the unnamed penitent was carried over into the first Anglican Prayer Book (that of 1549), which has the same Gospel for her feast day as the Roman missal; but Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus drops out of the picture entirely—as does Mary Magdalene herself in the second Prayer Book (1552), only to be replaced (so far as liturgical provision is concerned) in some of the more recent Anglican revisions. The Scottish Episcopal Prayer Book gives her a collect, epistle, and gospel. Likewise the English revision of 1928, which also makes her feast a red-letter day, providing it with lessons for Morning and Evening Prayer.

<sup>8</sup> I.e., Mary Magdalene (cf. the spurious ending of Mark at 16:9—"... he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons"—which rests upon Luke 8:2).

In fairness it should perhaps be added that the form-critical approach outlined above has vindicated Gregory on one point, viz., that there probably was just one anointing, though the identity of the woman involved is lost beyond recovery.

<sup>9</sup> My own translation of the relevant passage of *Homil. in Evangelia*, XXXIII, 1 (Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, Vol. 76, p. 1239).

Both of these books avoid identifying Mary Magdalene with the unnamed penitent, and commemorate her rather as a Witness to the Resurrection, using for the gospel John 20:11-18, and for the epistle II Corinthians 5:14-17. Both books have substantially the same collect, here given in its Scottish form:

O Almighty God, whose blessed Son did sanctify Mary Magdalene, and did call her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by thy grace we may be healed of all our infirmities, and always serve thee in the power of his endless life; who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Mary Magdalene does not appear at all in the calendar of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., which, except for the Mother of Jesus, presents an entirely masculine roll of saints.

To canvass the other liturgical churches on this point would take us too far afield for present purposes. In the nonliturgical bodies such commemoration of Mary Magdalene as might take place would be under the control of the local pastor or visiting preacher.

But though the Western tradition, identifying Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed penitent, maintained itself in general for centuries, there were not wanting voices of dissent. Thomas Aquinas, for example, was noncommittal. And the Uniate Eastern Churches, in communion with Rome, are apparently allowed to commemorate the three names on three separate days, thus differentiating between them.<sup>10</sup>

But what is even more significant for our present purposes, modern Roman Catholic biblical scholars seem to be coming around to this viewpoint. Thus R. Ginns, O.P., in commenting upon Luke 7:36-50 (the anointing of the unnamed sinful woman), says: "There is nothing in Lk. which justifies identifying her with Mary of Magdala [Mary Magdalene] 8:2, or Mary of Bethany, 10:38ff," and adds, in commenting upon Luke 8:1-3 (women disciples of Jesus), that "Lk. gives no ground for her [i.e., Mary Magdalene's] identification with the sinful woman of 7:36-50."<sup>11</sup>

This should clinch the matter. Against the identification of Mary Magdalene with the unnamed penitent and/or with Mary of Bethany can be ranged: (1) Eastern Orthodox tradition; (2) the preponderant weight of Protestant exegesis; (3) the more up-and-coming Roman Catholic opinion. This means virtually the informed Christian world. There seems,

<sup>10</sup> See *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, revised edition, New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1956, Volume III, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> See *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1953), pp. 950, 951.

then, to be no excuse for perpetuating further the false notion of identity.

It will perhaps be urged that the equating of Mary Magdalene with the unnamed woman "who was a sinner" has a powerful moral appeal, of great value in preaching: a woman who is a notorious sinner is converted, joins the group of ministering women, and is at last rewarded by a vision of the Risen Lord himself. Moreover, it is easier to refer to this woman if she is given a name.

There is some force in this argument, and yet not enough to justify the wholesale distortion of the evidence that it involves. One of the needs of our generation is for a clearer knowledge of the Bible. There is enough confusion, as it is, between what the Bible contains and what people think it contains. Why deliberately create more? If the Bible is indeed the Word of God, we need to receive it in as accurate a form as possible—and so to interpret it. Nor does the mere homiletical convenience of having a name for the anonymous penitent justify identifying her with Mary Magdalene.<sup>12</sup>

What, then, shall we do with Mary Magdalene? What should be her place in liturgical commemoration and/or homiletical exposition?

#### IV

To regard her as a Witness to the Resurrection, giving her that title as the English 1928 and Scottish Prayer Books do, provides on the face of it an attractive, positive, and wholesome emphasis. These books do not identify her as the *first* Witness to the Resurrection—except by way of using for the liturgical gospel John 20:11-18, which, taken in its larger context, implies that Jesus appeared to her first. And indeed it may be objected that to treat her in any way, shape, or form as a Witness to the Resurrection rests upon the late strata of Gospel tradition, particularly Johannine,<sup>13</sup> and is in apparent conflict with the list of Resurrection appearances given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:5f—our earliest bed-rock source.

On the other hand, B. H. Streeter argues that the tradition of a first appearance to Mary Magdalene may be a very old one—a rival indeed to that of a first appearance to Peter.<sup>14</sup> Thus it may well be that Jesus'

<sup>12</sup> Surely it is within the province of any preacher expounding Luke 7:36-50 to refer to the unnamed woman as *Peccatrix* (Latin feminine form for "sinner"), by which she is designated in the Vulgate. We have an exact precedent in our common use of the word *Dives* (Lat. "rich") as a name for the "rich man" of Luke 16:19f. In fact, *Sancta Peccatrix* ("St. Peccatrix") would, by the very paradox involved, be not only attractive but theologically appropriate. Or one might adopt a Latin hybridization of the Greek *hamartōlos*, "sinful" (person), and call the woman "St. Hamartola."

<sup>13</sup> Cf. also Matthew 28:1, 9, 10; Mark 16:9 (the spurious ending).

<sup>14</sup> Streeter, B. H., *The Four Gospels*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925, pp. 358-59.

first appearance after his Resurrection was to a woman. In any case liturgical commemoration need not be based upon higher criticism; we should certainly have a jejune calendar if it had to be. I see no reason, therefore, why we should not regard Mary Magdalene as a Witness to the Resurrection,<sup>15</sup> receiving as "given" the tradition to that effect—which may after all be sound—marking the high point in Mary's career.<sup>16</sup>

There are, however, two other emphases in connection with Mary Magdalene that are of decided relevance to Christianity today. These could be utilized at any time in preaching about her, and they might be given liturgical recognition in those Churches desiring to do so. Both are based upon Luke 8:1-3 already cited.

In this passage reference is made to "Mary Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out." Ours is an age in which much attention—although not nearly enough to take care of the need—is centered upon mental illness and its treatment and cure. What could be more appropriate, therefore, than to regard Mary Magdalene as the "patron saint" of all who are suffering from mental and emotional disturbance, from psychosomatic illness and its crippling effects?

Finally, Mary Magdalene, cured of such ills, was one of a group of women—presumably blessed to some extent with this world's goods—who accompanied Jesus and the twelve, particularly on the (last) journey to Jerusalem, and "provided for them out of their means." It seems to have been the custom of rabbis to be supported, in part at least, by women who, out of appreciation of their work, undertook to sponsor it financially. Even the radical critic, Charles Guignebert, comments thus on Luke 8:1-3:

There seems no reason to reject this statement *in toto*. Though details may be disputed, there is at least every probability of its being substantially true. These women provide what was needed and looked after the domestic work. Jesus and his itinerant disciples were thus probably the first to put into practice the principle established by the primitive community: he who preaches the Gospel must live by it.<sup>17</sup>

If this be true, we may see in Mary Magdalene and her fellow workers a prototype of those ladies' aid societies, women's guilds, and the like, which are so prominent a feature of church life today.

<sup>15</sup> The Rev. Reginald H. Fuller, to whom I am indebted for suggestions regarding this article, reminds me that Mary Magdalene can hardly have been regarded as an official witness to the Resurrection, for, on Jewish principles, she would, as a woman, be disqualified from serving in this capacity.

<sup>16</sup> If *syn gynaixin* of Acts 1:14 means "with the women" (i.e., those of Luke 8:2; cf. also 23:49, 55; 24:22, 24) rather than "with their wives"—either form is possible grammatically—the author of Luke-Acts would seem to include Mary Magdalene in the group here mentioned, and perhaps among those present at Pentecost. She is *not* represented in the Third Gospel as a Witness to the Resurrection except by way of being a Witness to the Empty Tomb (Luke 24:3, 8-11, 22-24).

<sup>17</sup> Guignebert, C., *Jesus*, translated from the French by S. H. Hooke, Alfred A. Knopf, 1935, p. 187.

# Church Efforts Toward an Industrial Ministry

CLAIR M. COOK

ACCORDING to statistics gathered in 1945-46, the occupations of 19 per cent of church members are business and professional; 20 per cent are white-collar workers; 17 per cent are farmers; but the largest group by far, more than twice that of any other, is the 44 per cent of church members who are urban manual workers.

Yet, as Dr. Victor Obenhaus points out in his book, *The Responsible Christian*:<sup>1</sup> "Urban manual workers generally do not constitute a vigorous and powerful segment of the church population. . . . It is a common scandal in the Christian household that the middle-class religious life of America is not the place in which the spiritual growth of the industrial workers is nurtured. . . . As the great frontier of the church a century ago was the expanding rural geographical frontier, today it lies in the interpretation of the Christian faith to the industrial man."

## THE HISTORICAL ERA OF NEGLECT

Until the rise of the "social gospel" near the end of the nineteenth century, the churches showed little concern for the ill-paid worker on whom rested so much of the burden of the advancing industrial revolution. The chasm between the church and the worker was wide and deep, with church leaders almost universally lacking in understanding of the social forces at the root of poverty.

A minister writing in a church paper of 1837 speaks of "contentions and animosities" where "the poor are arrayed against the rich, the mechanic

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<sup>1</sup> Pope, Liston, "Religion and the Class Structure," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1948, p. 87. Table given in Victor Obenhaus, *The Responsible Christian*, Chicago University Press, 1957, p. 54.

against the merchant, the laborer with his hands against the laborer with his head." A labor paper of 1846, viewing the church as invariably on the side of capital and ownership, uninterested in the physical and economic welfare of "the laboring classes," finds it not strange "that the operatives should stay away from the churches" where the "chief seats" are occupied by those who "have no sympathy with them, and look upon them only as inanimate machines, made to subserve their interests." "The church is governed by capital, and all the clerical sophistry and sectarian logic in Christendom cannot do away with this fact." In all ages, "the church has sanctioned oppression, fraud, slavery and wrong by fellowshiping with those who are engaged in perpetuating these evils, because they do not come within the *spiritual jurisdiction* of the Church."

Pew ownership and pew rental systems kept the ill-paid worker out. In a word, the workingman could not afford religion in the institutional class church. What effort there was to reach him was by an inherently patronizing arrangement of "missions" and "chapels" designed to save his soul, to evangelize from an upper-class home base.

The first official denominational concern appears in the Protestant Episcopal Church in an 1863 report to its Board of Missions on "The Church's Mission to the Working-Man." It contained the insight that "it is a fatal error when it is supposed that the independent workingman can be reached by measures specially designed for the poor and degraded"—that is, the mission chapel approach.

Yet, even after the era of Walter Rauschenbusch, Frank Mason North, and the realization around the turn of the century that perhaps the church's concern might include more than its "spiritual jurisdiction," denominational concern still put ministry to the worker in the category of evangelistic missionary effort. The first denominational Department of Church and Labor was that of the Presbyterians; the department was under the Board of Home Missions, with Charles Stelzle originally commissioned in 1903 as a "general missionary" among the workingmen.<sup>2</sup> It was Stelzle who originated noon-hour "shop campaigns" with the factory, involving hundreds of ministers and organized in-plant services reaching as many as 100,000 workers in a single Chicago campaign of ten days. Even as late as ten years ago, the official concern of the Methodist Church in industrial affairs, represented by John Harmon, was structured under the Board of Missions.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, C. M., "Charles Stelzle—Superior Workman," in *The New Christian Advocate*, September, 1957.



But there has been in the churches since the turn of the century a growth of concern at the same time for the social problems of labor and management relations, an effort to bring the church's influence to bear in the development of more Christian industrial conditions. This kind of concern for the group, a concern for working conditions, hours of work, rates of pay, the issues of collective bargaining, has found itself structurally under departments which may be given the generic name of "social service." In several instances, these departments began as committees or commissions on industrial problems during the first decade of the century, following the first great period of modern organized labor's growth between 1898 and 1904. The Federal Council of Churches' Commission on the Church and Social Service, organized at the Council's formation in 1908, worked from the start in this area. The work of its Secretary of Industrial Relations was the direct predecessor of the Department of Church and Economic Life in the National Council of Churches.

It would require a longer analysis than this paper can make to trace in detail these two concerns of the church for the worker, one the evangelistic effort to reach the individual in his continuing though lessened estrangement from the church, the other the effort to deal in broader terms not so much individually as collectively with the industrial scene and its social problems of organized relationships. The various experimental efforts of the churches today to develop an industrial ministry are oriented in some cases toward the one, in some toward the other. It is probable that some of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the entire field of the church's industrial ministry is caused by the lumping of both together, blurring the two purposes, trying to develop programs without a clear view of the desired end. Ideally, of course, the church's ministry must be inclusive, a concern for the individual worker at his task as a vital aspect of the whole person, and a concern for the corporate social setting of industrial life.

Within the Methodist Church we have persons at work whose ministry to industry lies in both these directions. As "pastor-counselor" for the Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the Rev. Clifford Peace is doubtless the most outstandingly successful among the so-called industrial chaplains. He has steered without deviation in the direction of a personalized ministry to individuals in the industrial setting, and has studiously avoided by choice any entanglement in the problems of industrial relations as usually understood. The Rev. Emerson W. Smith,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Recently succeeded by the Rev. Luther Tyson. Mr. Smith is now Associate Secretary of the Methodist Board of Social and Economic Relations.



however, as Chaplain of Industrial Relations for the Boston Area, has performed an equally successful ministry in the opposite direction. His counseling with individuals, when it occurs, is in the realm of applying Christian principles to action, not in relation to personal problems but in relation to group tensions. Such a ministry deals with the individual primarily as a member of the group, affected by group decisions made for many by the actions of those delegated whether by labor or management to do so.

It should be pointed out, however, that the work of Mr. Peace with the 12,000 employees of Reynolds does not follow the traditional evangelistic techniques of those who, in a common phrase, wish to "bring the worker to Christ," but is pioneering industrially in the still young field of personal counseling, a field which the church entered only a generation ago. To do so requires no less specialized knowledge and experience than that possessed by the industrial relations expert, yet for neither are the requirements met by general training and experience in the traditional ministry. Both have proven highly effective, but they can not be compared with each other. Both are tools, both are industrial ministry, but the similarity is scarcely greater than that between the drawing pen and the hammer, both tools in construction of a church.

#### FACTORY CHAPLAINS

The interest in and publicity about the so-called industrial chaplains—ministers hired by a company for full-time work among its personnel—has been all out of proportion to the numbers involved and the significance of the development. The total number of such factory chaplains at present is not more than nine, with four of them employed by one company, the R. G. LeTourneau Company, with plants in Texas and Georgia, which employed the first such chaplain in 1946 at an Illinois plant since sold to Westinghouse. Others are at Mid-Continent Petroleum Company, Tulsa; Fieldcrest Mills, Spray, North Carolina; Lone Star Steel Company and Dearborn Stove Company, Dallas, as well as Reynolds Tobacco Company, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In addition there are perhaps eight or ten more instances of part-time service by a local minister, usually one day a week, as chaplain in a plant.

An unpublished study made in 1956 listed twenty-five present industrial chaplains, plus six "retired" (cases where the program has been abandoned), and one scheduled to begin operations. But the list included every part and full-time work that could be discovered, and also bore the

names of several, such as the Rev. Emerson Smith, whose work is not properly in the category usually known as "industrial chaplain." Incidentally, in only one instance known to the writer is such a chaplaincy operating in a unionized company.

The National Association of Evangelicals has had a Chaplaincy Commission interested in promoting the idea, which seems to have a special appeal for those of a very conservative outlook. The attitude of perhaps a majority of the present chaplains is summarized in the words of one of the LeTourneau ministers, a Southern Baptist, who wrote in response to a questionnaire:

Our primary interest is to proclaim the love, righteousness and justice of God and to show men how that faith in Christ as personal Savior and real Christian living is practical and wonderful. Basically, the problems and needs of most of the men are spiritual needs and Christ is able to meet them. Physical, material and financial needs are easier met with Christ as a Savior and friend.

As for the denominational affiliations of chaplains, two are from the Assemblies of God, one is Bible Church, one Moravian, one Missouri Synod Lutheran, and two are Methodist.

#### OTHER IN-PLANT INDUSTRIAL MINISTRY

This, then, is one type of ministry to the worker—the full-time service of a minister employed on the payroll of a corporation. There are a number of situations in which a minister, pastor of a local church, has served a company in this capacity on a part-time basis, such as one day a week. In at least one case, when that minister took another parish, the company asked the pastor of another church to continue.

There are two other types of in-plant ministry, distinguishable by the fact that the ministry is not paid for by the corporation. In a number of cases, a lay minister employed in secular work by the company voluntarily conducts informal worship services. Then there are instances, the best known of which is that conducted for the past fifteen years within the Presbyterian Synod of New Jersey, with initiative from the church side for in-plant worship services and some counseling. Inaugurated in 1942 by the Rev. Anthony Monteiro as a war-time service for workers on a seven-day-a-week job, Dr. Edward A. Morris said of it in 1956:

The history of the movement has not been encouraging. There are approximately 1,500 manufacturing establishments in New Jersey employing over 100, and about 1,100 more employing between 50 and 99, or a total of about 2,600 manu-

facturing establishments. Looking at it factually and realistically, three chaplains and eight preaching points out of 2,600 possibilities after 14 years' cultivation does not look as if we have made much progress in this particular direction.

Dr. Morris, Associate Executive of the Synod of New Jersey, concludes that churches in industrial areas should consider industrial establishments as part of their parishes, but that the worker's personal relationship to his church should be from his home. "Labor strongly resents being singled out as a special problem group in our society requiring special treatment by the Church. They are persons, the same as any other kind of persons, with the same basic spiritual needs. Get men together in the name of practical Christianity, not in the name of industry, management and labor."

We are leaving aside here the many instances of in-plant worship services and prayer meetings which do not involve the church's direct ministry. They are most often outgrowths of a particular worker's concern, or sometimes management-planned. But as a lay activity of a spontaneous nature, they are not readily subject to planning or control of an outside religious body. However, it may well be that the church should explore the values or disvalues of in-plant services of this sort, whether they are genuinely helpful or lacking in worship qualities, and either encourage or discourage laymen to work along these lines.

#### PRESBYTERIAN INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A venture of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. which has proven its validity is its unique Institute of Industrial Relations, which operates under the Department of City and Industry within the Board of Home Missions. A lineal descendant, so to speak, of the work of Charles Stelzle, its original base was New York's Labor Temple, founded by Stelzle.

The General Assembly of 1944 adopted a statement on "The Church and Industrial Relations" which "recognized that if it was to minister effectively in the city it must understand the background and problems of the wage earners, many of whom belonged to trade unions." The Institute began classes in February, 1945, under the Rev. Marshal L. Scott, who has been its dean ever since. In June, 1952, the Institute was moved to McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

The purpose here has been neither directly evangelistic nor of a social action nature, but rather an educational project to prepare church leaders to deal with the worker and his problems at the local level. "It is not the purpose of the Institute to make labor relations experts of the ministers;

rather it is to make better ministers for industrial and urban America." In seminar groups of no more than twenty-five at a time, Institute students spend three weeks in intensive study, making visits to factories, management offices, union halls, city neighborhoods and institutions, community agencies, and city churches. Special lectures are given by union, management, and university experts.

A similar pattern prevails in the summer "Ministers-in-Industry" project of the Institute, begun in 1950. Theological students in this program are employed as "laborers, incognito, in factories and mills," in order to gain intimate understanding of the worker based on experience. The evenings, as in the three-week seminars for ministers from the parish, are filled with discussion and seminar study, while weekends include study of city churches in industrial neighborhoods. A program patterned after Dr. Scott's has operated at Boston University under Emerson Smith's leadership since 1954, with the exception of this past summer.

#### THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

In 1955 the American Lutheran Church through its Board of Christian Social Action created the office of Director of the Department of Church and Economic Life, the only denomination at present employing a full-time specialist dealing with industrial and economic problems only. From 1947 to 1953 the Congregational-Christian Council for Social Action employed an Industrial Relations Secretary, the Rev. Francis W. McPeck, in much the same capacity, but has not done so in the past four years.

The American Lutheran work is headed by the Rev. Theodore Pretzlaff of Dearborn, Michigan. The main function of the director he describes as "to gain new insights into the problems and needs of the industrial community, and to share this understanding with the membership of the church, through church periodicals, pastoral conferences and seminary courses; and to communicate to both management and labor the concern of the church in these areas."

Like Dr. Scott's work, this is an educational undertaking, but one which is an even broader commission than that of training church leadership. Up to the present, Dr. Pretzlaff has been concentrating on research in economic life and communicating his findings to the church rather than on developing any programmatic structures. The American Lutheran Church, he and his board believe, is in particular need of this kind of industrial interpretation because of its heavy rural membership, now shifting toward the urban.

## DETROIT INDUSTRIAL MISSION

One of the new developments in church concern for industrial problems is the Episcopalian project known as the Detroit Industrial Mission, whose executive director is the Rev. Hugh C. White, Jr., assisted by the Rev. Scott Paradise as associate director. Mr. Paradise was for three years associated with the noted English experiment headed by Canon E. W. Wickham, the Sheffield Industrial Mission. While the project is not following the Sheffield pattern, it will doubtless profit by Mr. Paradise's experience.

This work is based in four parishes, one of which is a Negro parish with seventy per cent wage workers, another containing many middle management and top executives of the auto companies. Its orientation, although still not entirely formulated, is about the problem of making work life meaningful from a religious standpoint. It "hopes to bring men a better understanding and the ability to analyze the meaning of their work. It intends to bring recognition of the vital place of religion in their daily lives, and to add in some measure to the dignity of man as he performs his tasks in an industrial society."

This emphasis on the Christian and his daily work, which includes preaching once a month in each of the four parishes, includes also visits to parish members in their work place, a sort of pastoral calling in shop and office; luncheon groups, discussion meetings, conferences involving management or worker churchmen. Along with the informally organized program is an attempt by the staff to grapple with the problems of the church's relationship to work and to workers, and to develop philosophy and approaches to serve the church as a whole.

## BOSTON AREA CHAPLAIN OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Following a year of study and the adoption of the committee's recommendations by the four annual conferences of the Boston Area, a co-operative area-wide Methodist work was established in 1951, supported by a "per capita" assessment originally set at five cents per member annually. The Rev. Emerson Smith became "Chaplain of Industrial Relations" on November 1, 1951, and in 1958 was succeeded by the Rev. Luther E. Tyson.

The functions of such a ministry as outlined by the original study committee included "Sunday pulpit and weekday speaking engagements in Methodist churches, Councils of Churches, and ministerial associations

upon the Protestant stake and interest in our industrial economy"; "regular news letters to the entire ministry of the Boston Area on significant and relevant industrial news including up-to-date recommended reading in the field"; "co-operation with Methodist churches at their request where industrial tensions present problems to the church and religious life of the community"; "meet, develop contacts, and speak to trade associations, management groups, service clubs and labor union locals, informing them of the Methodist interest and viewpoint in establishing and maintaining a Christian, democratic economy." These points have all been put into effect, with a decided impact and with very real accomplishment throughout the Boston area. One other point of the recommendations has not been carried out, unless the summer "ministers-in-industry" project at Boston University be counted in the category mentioned: "Establishment of Protestant Labor Schools . . . to present the Protestant interpretation and ideal on labor and management issues . . ."

In general, this may be called an educational approach, as are the Presbyterian and Lutheran works described. But it differs significantly in that the Chaplain of Industrial Relations has from time to time become personally involved in work directly with labor unions and management in a ministry of reconciliation during times of industrial dispute. He has performed a particularly effective work of interpretation to a limited yet fairly large area of the church, giving objective information and becoming competent as a specialist in matters of labor-management relations. No other ministry inaugurated by any of the churches, so far as can be determined, has developed the kind of professional knowledge and skill in this technical area which this chaplaincy employs.

#### CHURCH-LABOR-MANAGEMENT CONFERENCES

One of the helpful techniques which has been increasingly employed by several denominations and by councils of churches is the conference which brings together under church auspices both labor and management representatives to discuss the problems of their relationships and to inform churchmen. These have been sponsored by such groups as the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, which held the first denominationally-sponsored conference in this area in August, 1957, at Ridgecrest, North Carolina; the Social Action department of the United Lutheran Board of Social Missions, which for several years has sponsored Schools of Community Relations dealing primarily with labor-management



relations; the Methodist Board of Social and Economic Relations, which has had notable conferences at Athens, Tennessee, and at Detroit, the latter in co-operation with the Detroit Conference Board of Christian Social Relations; and the Southern California-Arizona Council of Churches Department of the Church and Economic Life, which in 1957 held a two-day conference at Napa, California, attended by about 100 people. One of the most ambitious efforts by a denomination was the first National Methodist Conference on Industrial Life, sponsored jointly by six church agencies and held at Cincinnati in the fall of 1958.

The Board of Social Missions of the United Lutheran Church, under direction of the Rev. Harold Letts, has developed this approach more thoroughly on a denomination-wide basis than any other group, encouraging "Schools of Community Relations" which "strive to make clear to men in labor and management and to the whole Church the relevance and meaning of Christian truth as it applies to economic life and industrial relations." Says a mimeographed "development guide" outlining standardized procedures: "Men should be trained to take a responsible and active part in the economic organization to which they belong."

These U.L.C.A. schools, organized at the synod or conference level by a committee of pastors and laymen, operate "on about the same educational level as the leadership training schools of the Parish and Church School Board. Schools running two hours a night, one night a week for six to ten weeks have been successfully conducted. . . . It is well to award certificates at the end of the school to those who have met attendance requirements." The Board of Social Missions has helped to subsidize such schools, matching funds from the sponsor group up to \$100 "in cases where prior consultation is made."

#### CONCLUSION

Mention might be made of some other work in this general area, such as the chaplaincy of the late Dr. Roy Mills of Des Moines to the city's central labor union, a work which has resulted in various local unions of the area enlisting chaplains from among the clergy along similar lines. Here, however, initiative must come from the union organizations; the program is not one which the church can itself promote directly as a part of its own development. The AFL-CIO maintains a Representative for Religious Relations, the Rev. Charles C. Webber, a Methodist minister who has devoted the last twenty years to full-time union work. The Religion and Labor Council of America (formerly Religion and Labor

Foundation), an independent membership organization working with Protestant, Catholic and Jewish labor and church leaders, promotes an educational program through local Religion and Labor chapters and work with seminary students.

But for the most part, the description above indicates the direction in which denominational efforts by churchmen have been moving. Perhaps the outlook is threefold in possible approaches rather than dual, as earlier indicated—with the educational, opinion-moulding generation of understanding of labor-management and economic problems as a third possibility along with the evangelistic and the direct social-action approaches. At last these three directions of past and current efforts are fairly clearly discernible. Each is an effort to bring Christian concern to bear upon the industrial area of life, with a ministry to the peculiar and changing needs of today's society. And while there may be differences of opinion as to the most effective and most desirable means for achieving it, there can hardly be less than unanimous agreement on the basic fact that the church does have a ministry to our industrial society, and that it must move forward with imagination, boldness, and vitality to achieve its mission.

## Commentary

### Theological Education in America

To the Editor of RELIGION IN LIFE

Dear Sir:

Some of the problems of theological education in America were examined in the previous issue of RELIGION IN LIFE. I was asked to write a brief commentary upon them, as I recently had the opportunity of visiting a number of American schools and as I have been concerned since 1938 in the training of men for the Anglican ministry. My impressions are bound to be superficial and may easily be mistaken.

Essentially, the four writers look towards an ideal theological education and, in the light of this ideal, examine the actual situation and suggest various reforms. It is an enterprise in "vigorous self-criticism." Their vision is of a theological education in which the whole church would be educating the whole man to be a Christian theologian facing the whole world of experience. Each act of education and training would be done at a particular time and place but it would be an act of the whole church, in the sense that it would be informed with a genuinely ecumenical spirit. It would be a local expression of the life of the whole church in living contact with the whole life of the whole world. These innumerable particular acts would have a universal significance without becoming featureless abstractions. The ecumenical church would be offering an ecumenical education, which would be free from the limitations and distortions of acts of education undertaken within more restricted contexts.

It is hardly surprising that, judged by such exacting standards, the actual state of theological education in America (as, I might add, elsewhere) is sadly deficient. The gap between the ideal and the actual is manifest. In fact, we are still only growing towards the renewed wholeness of the Christian Church and neither the world of men nor the world of knowledge has yet achieved more than a very tenuous unity. Actual training takes place in a divided church and a divided world. I felt, therefore, that the self-criticism was unduly severe. The serious limitations in the present means and methods of training may in part be due to the absence of the conditions which would make more perfect training possible. I hasten to add that this is not an invitation to complacency but a simple plea that we should keep ourselves within the limits of rational anxiety.

The writers are very properly concerned with what ought to be done here and now. The interim policies are designed to exploit what is now practicable in such a way that progress towards the ideal is not hindered but promoted. They envisage a long struggle in the realms of the theory and practice of theological education. I am a little concerned lest the urgency of the task may attract too much attention to what is practical and technical. No one would wish to deny the need for the Christian minister to be expert in the means of ministration which are appropriate to his special duties, nor would anyone wish to deprecate the importance of experimentation in an age when our theoretical convictions are often uncertain and unclear, but I feel that the practical side of the training and the use of experimental methods must not be allowed to obscure the central question of the *truth* of the religion which is being

proclaimed. It is the belief that Christianity is true which justifies and determines the proper means and methods of educating Christian theologians. Our theology must determine our theological education.

The crucial problem, as the writers well realize, is that the teaching church is perpetually in tension between claiming to possess the truth and being dedicated to the search for truth. There is the unending tension between faith and freedom; between theological conservatism and theological liberalism. It is the exacting task of those responsible for theological education to discern the contemporary form of this tension and to devise a form of training which is faithful to the demands both of faith and freedom. The form of the tension changes as our methods of inquiry change. A rational age expects the truth of Christianity to be open to rational inquiry. An empirically minded age expects the truth of Christianity to be empirically verifiable. We happen to be living in an empirical age which is nervously fluctuating between habitual trust and a new disturbing distrust of the adequacy of empirical investigations. This has affected our attitude towards the received tradition of natural and revealed theology. Our trust in empirical inquiries disposes us to trust in natural theology and in the historical study of Christian revelation in history. But our rising distrust of the final adequacy of narrowly empirical inquiries disposes us to distrust natural theology and to affirm that the whole truth of the Christian revelation is not accessible to purely historical studies.

In such an intricate and changing situation, it seems to me essential that theological education should be sensitively related to the methodological debate which is the present concern of many contemporary philosophers. The cure does not lie in the more intensive use of any of the available methods in a better understanding of their individual nature and scope. It is not practicable for us to comprehend all knowledge but a modern theologian requires an insight into the methods of theological study and into their relation to other established methods of inquiry. Such a methodological inquiry does not mean that we should admit that no truth is attainable, except by the methods of science and history. But, if we divide theological truth too crudely from other types of truth, we shall be conquered. The status of theology in the academic world will always depend upon the academic status of its methods.

Alongside the contemporary scrutiny of the methods of verifying theological statements, there is the widespread concern about the nature of religious language. This could lead to a constructive exchange of views between biblical theologians and those who are engaged in the natural sciences.

In short, I too look towards the vision of a truly ecumenical theological education, but I would emphasize the need to scrutinize the methods of theological study and the value of examining the nature of religious and theological language as the most immediate steps which ought to be taken towards the realization of the union which is calling us beyond the limited horizons of less majestic conceptions of theological education.

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## Book Reviews and Notices

**They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact Upon Religion in America.** By BERNARD A. WEISBERGER. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1958. xii-345 pp. \$5.00.

In spite of its flamboyant title, this is a serious study of revivalists and revivals. The scholarship, however, is never obtrusive, and the careful analysis and perceptive conclusions are set within the context of a fast-moving and fascinating narrative. This is made possible by confining the documentation and the weighing of evidence on disputed points to fifty-eight pages of notes at the back of the book.

The revivalist is defined as a traveling preacher who made a specialty and finally a profession out of the management of revivals, and the story is gathered about the activities of the conspicuous revivalists of the American scene—Lyman Beecher, Charles G. Finney, Dwight L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Billy Sunday. Little attention is given to the colonial awakenings, and the story begins with the Great Western or Kentucky Revival which penetrated the East in the persons of Lyman Beecher and more especially Charles G. Finney. The author regards this as the great creative period of revivalism which had exhausted itself by 1831 or 1835. He analyzes in detail its strengths and weaknesses, and notes both its positive and its negative contributions. The second great period came to focus in the person of Dwight L. Moody, who managed revivals with consummate artistry and whose generous spirit tempered and made bearable the manipulation that had been reduced to a science. With the disappearance of Moody from the scene, only the stage machinery remained and revivalism entered a period of rapid decay and degeneration.

This is a familiar story, but the author tells it with a freshness which springs from many new and illuminating insights. He concludes with a prognosis, weighing the prospects for a new revival and sketching the form that it is most likely to take. The prospects for a revival, he suggests, are not remote, but the form that he forecasts that it is most likely to take is apt to be sobering and even dismaying to many responsible Christians.

While Weisberger's detailed interpretation of the episodes of revivalism is fresh and rewarding, the over-all interpretation of its significance leaves something to be desired. This is largely due to the fact that he seized upon a misleading interpretative base. Taking his stance within New England, he pictures revivalism as a weapon forged by Congregationalists to counter the triple threat of infidelity, disestablishment, and the westward migration. This is scarcely the proper window through which to view the phenomenon of revivalism, for revivalism was neither a uniquely New England product nor a characteristic device of an established church. The only other established group in the colonies—the Anglicans—never used it in any conspicuous way. Furthermore, the tactic utilized by the New Englanders to deal with the westward migration was not the revival but the missionary society; hence the discussion of the Great Western Revival seems strangely out of place, coming, as it does, immediately after Weisberger's introductory analysis.

The inadequacy of the New England stance for an understanding and interpretation of revivalism would seem to be clearly indicated by the fact that, once the thesis is stated, the author never returns to it. He would have done much better had he seen revivalism as primarily the instrument of the non-established churches, and had

he taken as his starting point the Methodist insistence at the Christmas Conference of 1784 that "God's design" was "to reform the continent" by "spreading Scriptural holiness over the land." The revival was the characteristic expression of Evangelicalism, and it is for this reason that the nineteenth century has frequently been called the Methodist age in American church history.

Only at two or three incidental points does Weisberger stumble in his reporting. The "Old Calvinists," of course, were not "Consistent Calvinists," but their opponents. The notion that the world would be reformed by the reformation of individuals may have been naive, but it was scarcely a notion peculiar to the revivalists. At this point, as Ralph Gabriel has pointed out, they stood with Thomas Jefferson, sharing the popular romanticism of the time. Nor in a rapidly expanding economy with an open frontier could they be expected to make the type of social analysis that is the product of questions posed by a stable or decaying economy.

It is inaccurate to speak of Methodists and Baptists as "smaller denominations" during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, for they had already arrived in the big leagues. Nor is it accurate to categorize the Baptists as a lower-class group. They did lack respectability in the back-country of Virginia and the Carolinas, whence they spilled over the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee. But in New York, as Whitney R. Cross has noted, they were an upper-class denomination; in New Jersey, Witherspoon classified them as partners of the Presbyterians; and in New England, scholarships had long been provided for them at Harvard and their quite astonishing growth was largely due to defections from apostasizing Congregational churches by persons who regarded the Baptist churches as bulwarks of the old order.

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**The Gift of Conversion.** By ERIK ROUTLEY. Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1958. 144 pp. \$2.50.

Dr. Routley, a Congregational minister who has served as tutor at Mansfield College, Oxford, and contributed regularly to the *British Weekly*, attempts in this book a complete statement of what is the total experience of Conversion. Instead of limiting it to its emotional and ethical aspects, he sees the experience as intellectual, and a conversion not alone of the soul but of "being;" as a revolutionary experience which begins as a call to "stop, turn and attend." He considers the classic instances of conversion—St. Paul, St. Augustine, John Wesley—and declares that the common quality of their experience was "the sense of freedom." His biblical pattern of conversion is the experience of blind Bartimeus, deliverance from darkness into the freedom of light.

This freedom of new outlook and life, the author illustrates by the contrast of life lived under law and in the freedom of grace. He calls "law and grace" textures of life and attitudes of "being;" he traces the contrast through the Old and New Testaments, demonstrating that conversion must lead to the expression of a new attitude of freedom and issue in behavior which is patterned after Christ, who "at all levels" "welcomed the duty." By this latter repeated phrase he expresses the changed attitude to life which the new attitude to God will evoke—an attitude expounded by Dr. Tillich as "the courage to be."



His last chapter is apparently the real purpose of the book, which is to apply a more comprehensive conception of conversion to the techniques of modern evangelism. (He mentions specifically Dr. Billy Graham.) Conversion, he reminds us, is an individual experience; and no single example may be a pattern for all. Unanimity is a modern danger; it must be watched in both the main religious expressions of our time—Ecumenicity and Mass Evangelism. Both of these should be careful to respect individuality. The evangelist, particularly, should beware of three kinds of dependence which may be inculcated in his hearers by his personality and evangelistic techniques: Dependence upon himself, dependence upon the Bible, dependence of the wrong kind upon God or upon Christ.

By dependence, the author does not intend the exalted sense of the word as used by Schleiermacher, but as illustrated in the fanatical following of a dictator; that is, as a sense of legalistic enslavement. The preacher must point away from himself to Christ. The Bible must be no mere book of quoted texts apart from context, letter apart from spirit; nor a book which must be read with suspended judgment. It should be used with a respect for contextual integrity. Finally, God must be the God of Jesus Christ, who called men to bear a yoke that was not slavery, but a yoke that actually helped a burdened man to stand upright and talk with his God face to face.

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**Communism and the Theologians: Study of an Encounter.** By CHARLES C. WEST. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. 399 pp. \$6.00.

This book is a study of the encounter of Christian and Communist. This encounter is seen through the eyes of Christians face to face with communism, and various theologians who have entered into the debate with communism are analyzed. The study is based on the common presupposition of both communism and Christianity—that the good, the true, and the real are found, not in the realm of ideas or doctrines, but in the living relationship of concrete human beings.

Mr. West first examines those who, like Brunner, have identified Christianity with anticommunism and those who, like Hromadka, have identified Christianity with the communist cause. Despite the antithesis that these views seem to present to each other, West finds that they are both guilty of the same error—ideology. That is, they oversimplify the situation by identifying the cause of Christ too simply with the cultural values of their own time and place.

An interesting analysis of Tillich's Religious Socialism follows. One is struck by the fact that, under West's analysis, it appears that Tillich's social thought has been strangely irrelevant to the hard facts of social life in our time. Mr. West believes that this situation arises from Tillich's dependence on ontology, which causes him to force reality into his a priori confines instead of seeing reality for what it is. This is probably inevitable in any metaphysical system.

With Reinhold Niebuhr, West finds that theology begins to come to grips with the realities of the communist threat. But despite his realism, Niebuhr too fails, and his failure is found to be grounded in his theology. Niebuhr, argues West, consistently has taken his ethical ideas, not from Christ, but from history. The young Niebuhr used the ethics of Marxism, the older Niebuhr is using the ethics of liberal Americanism. As a result, Niebuhr is found to have grown more conservative and increasingly

irrelevant to the communist issue. Furthermore, Niebuhr, speaking to powerful America, analyzes the responsibilities of power, but he has no word for the Christian behind the iron curtain who has no power to wield. And, despite his reputation for being pessimistic, Niebuhr is found to have little awareness of the existential despair that drives men to communism. As a result, he has little to say about the spiritual problems involved in communism.

Americans who still hold to the myth that Karl Barth's theology destroys all social action will be amazed when West finds that Barth's theology has proved the most powerful of all in the actual living encounter of Christians with communism. Barth alone takes seriously the Marxian attack upon all ideology. He inspires Christians to witness in the world with a faith built on God's victory rather than on any worldly illusion. However, West finds that Barth's disciples have done a better job than Barth in analyzing concrete social problems.

This is a most helpful book in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the various attempts of Christians to come face to face with the problems raised by the emergence of communism. The author draws heavily upon firsthand experience in China and East Germany. He jars and disturbs many of our American prejudices, but it is a book that speaks to our condition. Unfortunately, it is written in a style that is ponderous, repetitive, and often hard to follow. But the reader who perseveres will find here a most important evaluation of the present Christian position in face of communism.

WILLIAM HORDERN

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**Church Dogmatics: Volume II, The Doctrine of God, Part 2.** By KARL BARTH. Translated by G. W. Bromiley, J. C. Campbell, Ian Wilson, J. Strathearn, Harold Knight, R. A. Steward. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958. xi-806 pp. 55s.

This, in actual count the fourth volume of Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, constitutes the climax of his treatment of the doctrine of God. It has two long chapters: The Election of God and the Command of God. The doctrine of election is treated here because God of the Christian faith is God of grace. The chapter on ethics follows because the grace of God is one which moves him to elect man as "partner" and to place him in a position of responsibility. It is characteristic of Barth's teaching that the traditional division between "theology" and "ethics" is consistently overcome, and the life and good of man is presented as growing out of God's "grace of election."

This volume again makes clear that Barth, despite his amazing knowledge of and genuine respect for "orthodoxy," is not orthodox. The one thing orthodox theology never succeeded in doing was to subject its every doctrine and thought to Jesus Christ. It would set down the doctrine of the Trinity as the Christian doctrine of God, and then would go off, as it were absent-mindedly, to speak of God, predestination, creation, man, providence, sin, damnation, as though Jesus Christ had little if anything to do with these matters. It is an outstanding virtue of Barth that he has tried to bring the Church's mind into subjection to Jesus Christ.

For Barth, "the election of grace is the sum of the Gospel" (p. 13, pp. 76-77, 92-93, etc.). In eternity, God decided to elect Jesus Christ, to love him and to be loved by him. This election is prior to the existence of creation, and the ground of it

and of all God's dealings with it. "Primarily God elected or predestined Himself. God determined to give and to send forth His Son" (p. 162). The Son is not only the elect of God but also the electing God. He represents "the eternal will of God in the election of Jesus Christ," in whom God has elected a people, Israel and the Church. This is why one must understand predestination through Christ, who is its subject (p. 110). There is no "absolute decree" apart from the grace of God exercised in Jesus Christ (p. 110).

Since the grace of God is absolutely prior to the existence and the action of the creature, it is superior to and inviolable by the latter's sin. The grace of election revealed in the cross and the resurrection of Christ forbids us to take our sin so seriously as to give ourselves and others up to perdition (pp. 418-419, 421). The Gospel means the primacy of election over "rejection." Those who reject God are in the Church. They are elect as members of the Church; as those to whom the grace of God is to be proclaimed, and whose damnation is not settled. God's election in Christ points to universalism, to *apokatastasis*. But God is not bound by it. Election does not force God to force those who reject him to elect him!

This is the situation as seen in Jesus Christ; and there is no going beyond it. However it is hard to make sense of Barth's insistence that in Christ the rejecters are already elect. One should be able to state the priority of grace to rejection without such an "ontological" version of it. What is the ontological sense of the statement: "It is not for his being but for his life as elect that he needs to hear and believe the promise" (p. 321)? If election contains command, being contains living, and living is the evidence of being. This is why we are sorry not to have the space to say more of the almost three hundred pages in which Barth discusses with characteristic freedom and brilliance the subject of Christian ethics.

We cannot be too grateful to the translators of the *Church Dogmatics* for making this tremendous achievement available in English. Let us hope that we shall make proper use of it for the increase of the Church among us.

JOSEPH HAROUTUNIAN

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**Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier.** By NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.  
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. 138 pp. \$2.50.

It is sometimes said by those brought up on the "social gospel" tradition that the present generation of theologians has lost the concern for culture at large which expressed itself in social radicalism and has instead become ingrown and complacent. But if there has been a diminishing passion for the reform of the economic and political orders, there has been an increasing awareness of the theological significance of the arts as revelatory of the plight of contemporary secular man, and there has been a corresponding attempt sympathetically to come to grips with the spiritual condition of modern culture with the help of the arts. Nathan Scott's book on the theological interpretation of modern literature is another important contribution to this rapprochement between theology and the arts.

Scott's first three chapters give some background on the relations of theology, literature, and literary criticism. Of especial value here is Scott's critical analysis (in Ch. II) of the new critics' conception of literature and poetry as autonomous

and utterly self-contained. "... those modern theorists who tell us that the literary work is merely a verbal structure and that its analysis therefore involves merely a study of grammar and syntax . . . forget that writers use language with reference to what they know and feel and believe and that we can therefore understand their poems and novels only if we have some appreciation of how their beliefs have operated in enriching the meaning of the words that they employ . . . the aspect of poetic art to which I have been referring by the terms *vision* and *belief* is precisely the element which we ought to regard as constituting the religious dimension of imaginative literature. When I speak of the religious dimension of literary art, in other words, I do not have in mind any special iconic materials stemming from a tradition of orthodoxy which may or may not appear in a given work . . . the religious dimension is something intrinsic to and constitutive of the nature of literature as such. . . . The literary work . . . is oriented by the *vision*, by the *belief*, by the *ultimate concern* of which it is an incarnation: its orientation, that is to say, is essentially religious. And this is why criticism itself must, in the end, be theological." (pp. 36-38.)

Having shown the theological element that pervades all literary art, and the consequent need to develop theological principles of interpretation, Scott proceeds, in Ch. III, to sketch out a "prolegomenon to a Christian poetic." Unfortunately, it is just at this critical point where the greatest constructive contribution might have been made, that the book is the weakest. For Scott has not thought through his theological position, but has simply taken over rather uncritically Tillich's view that religion is the substance of culture and culture the form of religion, and has combined this with a somewhat sentimental interpretation of Buber's I-Thou personalism, the latter rather seriously undercut by a large dose of esthetic mysticism. (E.g.: "... the Christian man must value so highly the contribution of the artist . . . for he traps us into . . . 'the disinterested stare of contemplation,' which however strenuous an exercise it may be for us, is a necessary precondition for the achievement of the kind of 'I-Thou' relationship with the things of this world for which the Christian imagination yearns" (p. 52).)

This theological stew, though rich, is so eclectic as to leave one in complete confusion regarding Scott's theological principles. Perhaps it is because of his failure to grapple seriously with Barth's thought (for which he has only snide remarks) that Scott so easily supposes that theology "must begin . . . with man . . . it originates in an analysis of the human situation . . ." (p. x). This basically anthropocentric orientation may be at the root of his difficulties in rising above an inconsistent eclecticism of theological principles.

The second half of the book (Chs. IV-VI) consists more directly of analysis of some of the central themes in contemporary writing. Here Scott's illumination of the way in which modern artists are concerned with the plight of the person in an impersonal society is both suggestive and convincing. One could only wish that what are often brief paragraphs of analysis of some important work had been developed into full chapters on individual works and writers.

A full and sensitive theological treatment of such writers as Faulkner, Joyce, Kafka, Lawrence, etc., all of whom are briefly discussed, is urgently needed, both by the Christian community which is often suspicious of them and their work, and also by the "cultured despisers" of the Church who are often unaware of the relationship between the insights of such artists and Christian theology. One can only hope that Scott will favor us with that fuller analysis in the not-too-distant future, and that

his pioneering work will be widely read and will stimulate others, also, to contribute to the theological understanding of contemporary literature.

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**The Man in the Mirror. Studies in the Christian Understanding of Self-hood.** Christian Faith Series. By ALEXANDER MILLER. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1958. 186 pp. \$3.95.

Alexander Miller left Scotland when he was thirteen years old, the book jacket biographical sketch says, and went to New Zealand. But if the boy left Scotland, a Scots felicity with words and a sturdy Scots theology never left the boy. Both are in this volume in good measure. This book combines theological substance and evangelical concern, and adds a third dimension as well. Miller is urbane and wise, not merely clever, as so many who write in this realm of culture and faith are. He knows today's culture and he knows his own experience. It all adds up to a superb and powerful sermon.

The easy conversational style never lapses. Perhaps this is due to the fact that these were lectures addressed to a university audience. That flavor is in them. But this is conversation with style. No man writing is able to incorporate his own experience into the argument in an illustrative way more organically and completely than Miller. His illustrations really push things forward. Only in one chapter ("Our Contemporary Age," where he tried to do too much) does his pace leave the unhurried, even, persuasive tempo, and become a little hurried, erratic, and breathless.

He charts his course in a quote from Langmead Casserley: "Personal life is lived, of necessity, in history and in selfconscious depth at the same time. The historian who has not made the existential discovery of the impenetrable depths of the human consciousness . . . cannot appreciate the kind of being it is his function to be historical about. But if the non-existentialist historian cannot identify the person, the non-historical existentialist cannot locate him."

"Our problem is to get ourselves located," Miller says. And this he does. He locates man, ranging through a discussion of the self's knowledge of itself through psychology, and the self as seen in the mirror of history. He finds psychoanalytic introspection and secular historical introspection both inadequate. He comes quickly to his central conviction that the person of Jesus Christ is crucial for our understanding both of history and of life, and of our own life.

There are some luminous pages in which the meaning of the holy history of the Bible is opened up, and Christ as the axis or center of all history is emphasized. More than emphasized: preached, in fact. He is vigorous in insisting "that the half-truths of contemporary naturalism and existentialism are both contained and transcended in scriptures and the great dogmas based on scriptures. To appropriate scripture and tradition is . . . to find our prisoned thoughts take wing, and to find the perplexing riddles of our own nature yield to a truth which clearly knows us better than we know ourselves."

Then Miller carries this conviction boldly out into our contemporary intellectual age and into our contemporary culture to see what it says. The final chapter on selfhood and salvation drives home his point that only in Christ is man freed from himself, made free in his own and in human history to understand who he is and

why he is. The full meaning of self can only be seen in distorted ways from within the self and from within history. It takes the invasion of history, personal and universal, by God in Christ, both to illuminate and to redeem. The word "redeem" takes on new meaning here in the pawnshop usage of an object purchased back and restored to its rightful owner. To use words spoken of John Donne, but applicable to Alexander Miller, "... always in the end his sermons come back, as a great wave covers the bare and desolate places of the shore, and he remembers his felicity as a prisoner of God, manacled by the mercies of his Saviour, saved from the dissolute liberties of eternal death."

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**Christian Affirmations in a Secular Age.** By GIOVANNI MIEGGE. Translated from the Italian by Bishop Stephen Neill. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958. xiii-170 pp. \$3.75.

This was my first contact with Miegge. I have not read his much-discussed book *The Virgin Mary*, but shall make haste to do so.

Giovanni Miegge, who is now Professor of New Testament at the Waldensian Theological Faculty in Rome, served as a pastor in Northern Italy, and apparently turned to writing when illness denied him the local ministry. One of the extraordinary and encouraging things about this present work is that it is as fine a synthetic handling as we have of the biblical and theological work of the last generation; and though it refers for the most part to British and German materials, it will quite certainly commend itself also on this side of the Atlantic. It represents a theological consensus which crosses the denominations and the continents, and wins the positive and grateful attention also of scholars within the Roman Church.

I was a little repelled by Bishop Neill's rather arch Foreword: "Miegge and I have concluded that we are the only specimens yet known of a new species, the post-Barthian liberal. (It is thought that a third specimen may be named Karl Barth, but this is not yet certain)." And I found Miegge's initial treatment of the traditional proofs for the existence of God somewhat turgid and unfruitful, but when he had extricated himself from this kind of argumentation and proceeded to an exposition of the Christian faith on its own biblical ground, I found myself lifted and carried by an argument of notable cogency and balance, expressed in a prose of unusual precision and often of glowing and moving eloquence. Bishop Neill refers, with examples, to the difficulty of rendering Italian into English; but I find it hard to believe that this particular work has lost much if anything in translation.

Perhaps one is wrong to be astonished at the effectiveness with which this Italian Waldensian intervenes in discussions which one had parochially assumed to be rather more local concerns. For example, while he does not refer directly to Niebuhr and Tillich, his discussion of the categories of personality and ontology (pp. 32-34) is most pertinent to their differences. And not only does he write with notable and translucent clarity on the Bible and the Church, and on the Person and the work of Christ, but he brings to the illumination of our contemporary concerns a most pertinent use of the tradition: for one example, his recovery of Ignatius of Antioch's reference to the "choral" consciousness of the Christian community (p. 169).

In short, there are few matters of central Christian concern which he does not touch, and none as far as I can see which he does not illumine. On many of them



he seems to this reviewer to speak a normative word, and I should commend the book not only to the literate layman, but to those especially who do the work of teaching either in pulpit or in classroom.

ALEXANDER MILLER

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**The History of Israel.** By MARTIN NOTH. Translated by Stanley Godman. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. viii-479 pp. \$7.50.

The last quarter-century has borne witness to an unprecedented development in biblical research, spurred by the tremendous advances in the sciences of archeology and linguistics. A vast amount of material has been turned up to provide the basis for a fresh and satisfying reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel, something not possible several decades ago, when such important histories as those of Meyer, Kittel, Lods, and Oesterley and Robinson could not fully benefit from the results of these two still infant disciplines. The most recent, and undoubtedly most important, effort to write a history of Israel which utilizes effectively much of the relevant extrabiblical data is that of Martin Noth, first published in German in 1950, then revised and expanded in 1955, and now, thanks to Harper & Brothers, brought out in an English translation based on the second German edition.

The translation by Stanley Godman is satisfactory, though not wholly devoid of the prolixities of the underlying German style, nor always careful to render felicitously some rather obvious Germanisms. This reviewer was also somewhat surprised to see the retention of the German orthography when citing place names, and even occasionally personal names, a factor which might well contribute to the confusion of the nontechnical reader. There are, moreover, far too many misprints in the English edition which mar the quality, and occasionally the sense, of the text.

A basic question which must be asked of any reconstruction of Israelite history is this: what methodology has been employed for evaluating the traditions and other historiographic material? Noth stands today as the most distinguished representative of the creative German school of history writing founded by the late Albrecht Alt, a school applying rigorously the methods of form criticism and literary analysis (following Gunkel), coupled with the results of archeological investigation. It would be foolhardy to quarrel with these methods *per se*, for they are fundamental to any sound critical approach to the history of Israel. However, questions may be raised concerning the *manner* in which these methods are employed, and to *what extent* they influence conclusive historical judgments. The most recent thoroughgoing critique of the application of the Alt-Noth school's methodology is in John Bright's *Early Israel in Recent History Writing* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 19; Alec R. Allenson, Inc., Chicago, 1956)—a work with which this reviewer is in general sympathy, and to which the reader may be referred for more detailed consideration.

The principal limitations of Noth's historical method can be most clearly discerned in his treatment of Israel's early history, i.e., before the settlement in Palestine, which he prefers to deal with solely in terms of sacred traditions of the Twelve Tribe Confederation (p. 110). He defines "Israel" as the "union of the twelve tribes domiciled in Palestine" (p. 5), meaning that prior to this event the entity "Israel" cannot be given any precise historical articulation. He grants that the patriarchs may have lived as historical persons (p. 121), that the Sinai tradition did derive from an actual event (p. 127), and that the Exodus was a real event (p. 116), but no more

definite historical assertions can be made for those periods. Finally, the occupation of the land of Canaan cannot legitimately be described as a "conquest," since it really "took place fairly quietly and peacefully on the whole and without seriously disturbing the great mass of the previous inhabitants" (p. 69). The Joshua narrative of a warlike and destructive invasion must be discounted, since it represents merely a series of etiological traditions proceeding from the later events of the destruction of the sites in question (p. 82, note 2).

Although one cannot help but admire Noth's careful and critical treatment of his sources, and his passion to be absolutely honest in evaluating the historical material contained in the Israelite traditions, it must be confessed that when confronted with the whole weight of evidence, including the archeological (which he respects, but nonetheless rather too severely restricts, cf. p. 41), he does not consistently formulate his historical judgments where the balance of probability lies. But beyond these somewhat radical judgments in the early chapters, there are some very fine discussions of the land of Palestine, the sources of Israel's history, and most of all, an excellent explication of the rise and development of the amphictyonic organization (still best described by that term despite recent criticism leveled against it).

Once in the clearer light of history, Noth's treatment of Israel's development becomes more positive and less problematical. In Part Two he traces "The Life of Ancient Israel in the Palestinian-Syrian World" from the time of the Judges till the death of Solomon, effectively supplementing and illuminating the biblical narrative with considerable material drawn from recent archeological and epigraphic research. Part Three discusses "Israel Under the Rule of the Great Powers of the Ancient Orient," bringing Israel through the critical age of Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian political activity, and then examining the re-establishment of Jewish religious and political life under the rule of the Persians and the Macedonians. A chapter in this section on the end of the State of Judah could well have profited from the publication of the latest tablets discovered from the Babylonian Chronicle, which unfortunately were not published until after the appearance of the second German edition.

The concluding part deals with "Restoration, Decline, and Fall," in which is presented an excellent discussion of the often complicated events of the Maccabean Revolt and the ensuing Hasmonean monarchy, terminating with a chapter on the Roman Period, within which Noth sees the end of Israelite history in the failure of the insurrection led by Simeon bar Kochba. Actually, Noth makes the statement that the real end of Israel's history came in the person of Jesus (p. 430), a conviction quite consonant with Christian theology, but not prepared for by the preceding narrative. This leads to the comment that throughout his history Noth is primarily concerned with political and institutional development, not with the nature and role of faith—undoubtedly a weakness in his entire work.

The book is well documented with footnotes, referring the student principally to German sources, though the most important English works are not ignored. At the end of the book is appended a useful general bibliography. In the Second German edition there is a map insert which could have been profitably added to the English edition, which is singularly barren of either maps or pictures.

One might question the advisability of using Noth's work as a textbook for the beginning student in Old Testament history, particularly if the latter is unfamiliar with the presuppositions of the Alt-Noth school. This would apply primarily to the

early chapters of the book. Yet regardless of what one thinks of Noth's historical judgments, it is impossible to read a work such as this, containing as it does such a vast accumulation of the best in German biblical scholarship, and not learn much.

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**Prophetic Faith in Isaiah.** By SHELDON H. BLANK. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. x-241 pp. \$3.75.

**Jeremiah: Prophet of Courage and Hope.** By J. PHILIP HYATT. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958. 128 pp. \$2.00.

**The Exilic Age.** By CHARLES FRANCIS WHITLEY. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. 160 pp. \$3.50.

1. According to the author this is neither an introduction, a commentary, a polemic nor "a survey of recent literature upon." It is an attempt to find meaning in parts of the Book of Isaiah and to set the meaning forth. Rabbi Blank's contributions to the study of Isaiah are widely recognized; several of them are included in this volume. Even the casual reader will appreciate the independence of judgment (if it does not startle him) and the religious insights and sensitivity which characterize the whole volume.

The Book of Isaiah is a complex literary work; it contains a variety and diversity of ideas and ideals set in a variety of historical contexts. Blank regards the Book as the work of the eighth-century prophet and "the later Isaiahs"—a term coined for convenience—the Isaiah of legend, Isaiah the messianist, the apocalyptic Isaiah, the Second Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah ("only a convenient way of referring to chapters 56-66 . . . probably no single prophet composed them") (p. 173); for "a man would be daring who ventured to say how many such 'Isaiahs' there were" (p. 7).

Rabbi Blank holds that Isaiah is a joyous book, but not because the son of Amoz was a joyous man. Quite the contrary. It is the succession of "later Isaiahs" who make it joyous, who set forth the various "shapes of hope": the Isaiah of legend who expounds the popular view of an inviolable Zion (36-39), and the Immanuel prophecy of chapter 7; the Second Isaiah who in his rhapsody of surpassing comfort produces a whole new religion of hope because God is God and Israel is his prophet (servant); the more narrowly messianic Isaiah of the beginnings of chapters 9 and 11; Isaiah the apocalypticist in the vision of chapters 24-27; the creative concept of hope as a duty, divine requirement more than a heavenly gift, in the thought of the authors of Trito-Isaiah; and the "Isaiah" who discovered the Promethean element in biblical prayer (the faith of the righteous believer, Isa. 62; cf. Exod. 32).

The author holds that the common ground among these Isaiahs is the area of hopeful faith which they all urge. Such faith, which sometimes means doing, sometimes believing, alternates in the historical and later Isaiahs between a passive and an active role, between surrender and effort, receiving and giving, expectancy and repose. But the differences between the historical and the later Isaiahs are more conspicuous. The historical Isaiah was a prophet of challenge and stern demand (imperatives), of brave ideals and uncommon aspirations. The faith of the later Isaiahs is a source of confidence, of reconciliation with God, of a renewed covenant for a chosen servant. The first Isaiah looked to a day when God would be exalted

though his people perish; the later Isaiahs to a day when God and his people Israel would triumph together.

Blank believes that Isaiah 7 is a composite: vss. 1-16, a legend; vss. 17-25, a prophecy of the historical Isaiah which reflects confident faith in God in the crisis of 701 B.C. He thinks it impossible to identify Immanuel. He identifies the servant of 52:13-53:12 as the personified and idealized Israel, not an unusual identification among Jewish scholars but one which is here supported with a careful and skillful use of literary evidences. Blank's eloquent appreciation for the influence of the Second Isaiah (40-55) involves incisive considerations of monotheism, the significance of history, and the relation of prediction to fulfillment. These considerations, his appraisal of the influence of Jeremiah and Ezekiel on the teachings of the Second Isaiah, and his emphasis upon the importance of Trito-Isaiah, are among the most interesting and valuable sections of the volume.

Notwithstanding their skill and judiciousness, these highly analytical studies pose problems. The differences between the first and the later Isaiahs are so unqualifiedly and emphatically asserted that the reader may wonder on what basis Blank can suggest that the Isaiahs share the common ground of hopeful faith. Is this the unifying bond, or is the Book of Isaiah merely the result of one or a series of literary accidents? Or were at least some of the later Isaiahs disciples of the eighth-century prophet and loyal to the Isaiah-tradition across several centuries because they had a rather greater appreciation of the son of Amoz than does Professor Blank? Was the historical Isaiah really "gloomy and thoroughly unpleasant" (p. 6)? Again, is it a lack of theological awareness or a case of oversimplification to deny that the servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 vicariously atoned for the sins of the nations? In so doing the author runs the risk of depriving the song of what is clearly its intended theological meaning. Surely redemption through vicarious suffering is an involvement of the mission of Israel (pp. 138-60). This involvement is an inherent part of the concept of the idealized Israel.

Sheldon Blank writes in an absorbing and lucid style. Even those who take exception to his critical and theological views will benefit enormously from reading the book.

2. In *Jeremiah: Prophet of Courage and Hope*, we are provided with a competent and readable summary of Professor Hyatt's views about this prophet. More detailed evidence for his views is available in the Introduction and Exegesis of Jeremiah which Hyatt provided for Volume V of the *Interpreter's Bible* (Abingdon, 1956). This valuable study centers around three topics: (1) a portrayal of Jeremiah's times; (2) an examination of the biographical materials with the intention of discovering his personality and religion and of singling out his prophetic qualities; (3) an estimation of the permanent values in the prophet's life and message, especially as they are relevant to contemporary needs.

The presentation includes significant departures from generally accepted views of Jeremiah's ministry. Hyatt believes that Jeremiah was born in 626 B.C. and that his earliest messages were delivered in the reign of Jehoiakim (for Hyatt's earlier view that the ministry began in 614-612 see JBL 59 (1940), 499-513). Since no part of the Book can be assigned to the reign of Josiah, Hyatt denies that the early chapters contain references to a Scythian invasion, in his judgment the foe from the north was Babylon. He also holds that the Book of Jeremiah was edited by Deuteronomists in about 550 B.C. Notwithstanding this fact, he finds surviving

evidences that Jeremiah disagreed with many of the fundamental principles of the Deuteronomic reforms.

These conclusions represent a rather drastic departure from the more traditional views of such men as Skinner, G. A. Smith, and S. R. Driver. And yet Hyatt's views are sensitively and judiciously stated and are supported with evidences and careful interpretations which cannot be lightly disregarded even by those who disagree.

Layman and scholar alike will appreciate the introductory definition of prophets as spokesmen of God, as intercessors, and often as poets and users of dramatic symbols; the extent to which the great prophets were ecstasies and foretellers is also considered. An assessment of the permanent values of Jeremiah's life and message and an attempt at a chronological arrangement of the book are distinctive contributions.

The author concludes that the inner life of Jeremiah is summarized in one word: tension—between the nature of his soul and the demanding call of God. The tension was sharpened when Jeremiah found himself in opposition to nearly everyone. In this painful role he had the wisdom and courage to give utterance to his doubts and fears, all the while keeping faith in the existence and ultimate goodness of God. Out of this intimate acquaintance with God Jeremiah discovered certain theological tenets: God, the Sovereign Power who has created and who sustains, is also redeeming and forgiving love (a recurrent emphasis in Hyatt's appraisal of Jeremiah's religion); because he demands moral obedience, the prophet must denounce sin, call for repentance, and remind Israel that the element of hope, especially for a New Covenant, is an integral part of true religion. Such hope "must be based on realistic appraisal of the situation in which men find themselves, faith in the purposes of God, and confidence in the ability of men to obey God" (p. 114). This true religion, at its best, is internal, spiritual and personal. Jeremiah was unsurpassed among the prophets in the intimacy of his relationship to God; in that fellowship he discovered the dialogic nature of true prayer. Throughout his ministry Jeremiah seems to be saying that, from a theological point of view, despair is the unpardonable sin.

This book is large in content, at home in the tradition of the best scholarship, lucid in style, and evidences independence of judgment and admirable religious insight. These are qualities which we have learned to expect from this author (cf. his *Prophetic Religion*, Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1947), and which helped considerably to make Volume V one of the best of the *Interpreter's Bible*.

3. The Babylonian Exile has been memorialized by the Jews as an event second in importance only to the Exodus in their history. Indeed, many would hold that it was theologically the most productive event.

In *The Exilic Age*, C. F. Whitley, lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament in the University College of North Wales, takes a probing look into the sixth century, "an age of challenge and change" in the Near East. Assyria and Egypt were in a state of decline; the author believes "that the limitations imposed on the individual contributed more than any other cause to that decadence" (p. 26). This situation was in sharp contrast to the tendency toward individualism and freedom of religious thought which is found in the message of the exilic prophets, the rise of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and the origins of Greek thought. In power and in thought the Indo-Europeans were becoming prominent in history. Here were the

beginnings of the age of philosophy, science and theology, and of the move from "tradition and credulity to argument and reason" (p. 3).

Against this context and the exile the author considers the prophetic contributions of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah. It was a matter of immense importance for Israel that the classical age of prophecy coincided with the most troublous days of her history. Through the prophets the exilic age brought, not destruction to Israel, but a unifying recognition of the universality of her God.

After dealing with date and authorship, Whitley demonstrates how these prophets confronted the exiles with concepts of God requisite to their new circumstances. Jeremiah condemned the notion that approach to God lay through cultic channels; he declared that deity would destroy the temple and so propounded, in effect, a new conception of God: God holds universal dominion and may be seen in the movements of the nations; he will preserve the essentials of true religion; he may be found wherever the heart of man sincerely seeks him, for religion is essentially a relationship between God and the individual soul. By his grace he will even forgive Israel's infidelity and give her a New Covenant.

In Ezekiel the Old Israel came to an end; the new era of the individual was inaugurated. At a time when the exiles interpreted their captivity as a punishment for the iniquities of the nation, and so began to question the justice of God, Ezekiel preached the doctrine that God exacts retribution for individual sins only. The individual himself is responsible for any punishment he bears. But God acts so that men may ultimately gain redemption and grace from his actions. True, God will vindicate his holiness and sovereignty in the eyes of the nations, but he will not abandon the exiles. This stress on individualism and the sacredness of the individual soul is the prelude to Ezekiel's declaration of the atoning grace of God in effecting the salvation of man (p. 117).

Whitley finds "the most sublime expression of Hebrew religion" in the Second Isaiah, "... inheriting the revealed truths of earlier Hebrew prophecy and stimulated by the intellectual ferment of his age, Deutero-Isaiah declared that the world was created by One God, eternal in His Being, universal in His sovereignty and whose message to mankind is, 'Come unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.' Thus of all developments of thought which converged to make the exilic age one of the most significant in history this conception of God . . . has had the most profound consequences for the spiritual life of man." (p. 152)

This is a competent and stimulating study. In matters of authorship, date, etc., the author is eminently fair and discerning; he is aware of critical problems involved and of earlier attempts at resolving them. He states his own views forthrightly and with a careful regard for the evidences. His major emphasis on individualism in exilic Israel is valid. Is there not, however, great danger that so emphatic a statement of the case for individualism may seem to overlook the vital bond between the individual and his community? Certainly each of these prophets saw the individual, however free, essentially as a member of the Israelitic community. Should great point not be made of the continuing and creative tension between certain individuals and their community? When do the interests and welfare of the community (or majority) take priority over the tendency toward individualism and freedom of religious thought? Might great point not be made of the fact that Ezekiel was so influential because he struck a balance between the interests and hopes of the individual



and the group, and put that balance in proper perspective even in the disturbing times of the exile (cf. chapters 18 and 40-48)?

The Babylonian Exile represents, at least symbolically, the tragedy of Jewish history. Yet, in that very hour Israel was clustered about with prophets of gigantic stature—inspiring evidence that the resources of God are adequate to the needs of men. This fact makes Whitley's study peculiarly relevant to our time.

**HARRELL F. BECK**

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**Theology of the Old Testament.** By EDMOND JACOB. Translated by A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. 368 pp. \$5.00.

**Old Testament Theology.** By LUDWIG KÖHLER. Translated by A. S. Todd. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. 259 pp. \$4.50.

Unknown to the ordinary Bible reader, a quiet revolution has been taking place in recent years in the field of Old Testament studies. Down to about 1930 the chief interest of Old Testament scholars was in literary criticism—the analysis of the biblical books into their original components—and in the history of the religion of Israel—understood to be a branch of the science of comparative religions. While there are still scholars for whom these matters continue to be of central importance, it is no exaggeration to say that for most men in the field the real focus of interest has been transferred to Old Testament theology. More books and articles have been published on this subject in recent years than in any comparable period in the history of the discipline, and even scholars whose primary concerns are elsewhere feel an obligation to show the theological relevance of their own studies.

As is the case with most such movements, the first impulse arose on the continent of Europe. While many books dealing with Old Testament theology have appeared in French and German, only one full-scale treatment has thus far been published by an English-speaking scholar (the late Professor O. J. Baab's *The Theology of the Old Testament*, in 1949). But with the publication of these two translations of important European books (and translations of at least three more—those of Eichrodt, Vriezen and von Rad—are promised for the near future) it is evident that something more than a ground swell has reached our shores and that we may expect a wave of production in this area by English and American scholars.

Just what is Old Testament theology and why is it important? It is the study of the way in which the men of the Old Testament thought about such things as God, Man, the Meaning of Life, the Goal of History, and the Nature of Sin and Goodness. It is not so much concerned with tracing out the history of Old Testament religious ideas (though it certainly does not deny that many of them underwent a process of development) as it is in setting forth the broad pattern of thought which more or less dominated the mind of Israel in every period of her existence. Its importance is that, while it is a thoroughly scientific discipline which aims at truth rather than mere edification, its concern is with the things which make the Old Testament meaningful rather than merely interesting. For this reason it is a field of study which every preacher and student of the Bible needs to become acquainted with. Not the least of its values lies in the fact that the men of the New Testament stood with their feet planted squarely in the Old Testament tradition, and thought

primarily in Old Testament categories. So a knowledge of Old Testament theology is an indispensable prerequisite for understanding the theology of the New Testament.

While both these books are useful and worth their price, some differences should be noted. The first is that Professor Köhler's book is not a new one, having been originally published in German in 1935 when interest in Old Testament theology was just reviving—although the present translation was made from the revised edition of 1953. Professor Jacob's work, on the other hand, first appeared (in French) as recently as 1955 and is therefore almost hot from the press. Although the latest book is not necessarily always the best book, it must be said that Jacob's work is, in addition, considerably more comprehensive than Köhler's and more exhaustive in its treatment of details. Particularly valuable is the series of extensive bibliographies with which every section in the Jacob's book is supplied, which—at least theoretically—makes it possible for the interested student to pursue the subject at greater length.

Köhler follows the traditional division of Old Testament theology into the three broad topics of God, Man, and Salvation, thus following the outline suggested by Christian dogmatic theology. Jacob attempts to deal with the subject in a more original way by making God the center of attention in each section: Part One deals with "The Characteristic Aspects of God" (i.e. his Nature); Part Two with "The Action of God" (in which he introduces rather awkwardly the subject of man's nature and destiny); while Part Three discusses "The Opposition To and Final Triumph of God's Work." This is not a particularly successful, or even logical, outline, but the material is all there, which is more than one can say for Köhler. The most striking weakness in the latter lies in his inadequate appreciation of the cult, which he classifies as "Man's Expedient for His Own Redemption" and dismisses with only a brief account. Jacob is more objective in his judgment and recognizes that the originality of Israel did not consist in the repudiation of traditional forms of worship, but rather in transforming their significance by connecting them with history rather than myth.

While Jacob's book is the better textbook on the subject, both works are valuable contributions and might well be read together for the sake of their different nuances, emphases and areas of concern: Old Testament theology is one of those subjects which gains by being viewed from more than one angle.

ROBERT C. DENTAN

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**The Monuments and the Old Testament.** By IRA MAURICE PRICE, OVID R. SELLERS, and E. LESLIE CARLSON. Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1958. 450 pp. \$6.75.

**The World of the Old Testament.** By CYRUS H. GORDON. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1958. 312 pp. \$3.95.

Of the making of archeological books there is no end, but much study and excavation seems not to weary the authors at all. This happy fact makes possible the present welcome pair of volumes. Both are new editions, Gordon's the second (formerly *Introduction to Old Testament Times*), the other a complete rewriting of a book that first appeared in 1899, with many revisions following. Dr. Price

passed away in 1939, so that now the work is entirely in the hands of Sellers and Carlson.

The two books cover much the same ground: Old Testament background and history, with a bit of literary criticism thrown in here and there, all seen through archeological eyes. Both works are designed as textbooks. Otherwise, they are very different. Sellers-Carlson have more pages, a better quality of paper, more illustrations, and more translations of ancient texts. Gordon's volume is rather modest in these respects (as in price). But the real difference is more fundamental.

Sellers-Carlson give us a sort of "standard" textbook, packed with facts, almost encyclopedic, avoiding controversial positions and provocative statements (though the Maccabean date of the Book of Daniel is cautiously suggested). Gordon, on the other hand, is original, provocative, and controversial, making his book a sort of personal testament of faith, taking unusual positions, sparing neither liberal nor conservative. His special contribution is to insist on the interrelation and interpenetration of cultures. The sweep of his intellect takes in the Greek lands and cultures along with those of nearby Asia and finds them all a part of one world. Many epic parallels between the Homeric poems and the Bible and other Near Eastern literatures are cited. Into this context is inserted Gordon's latest and greatest heresy: the proposal that the hitherto undeciphered "Linear A" tablets from Crete (seventeenth to fifteenth centuries B.C.) are written in Accadian! The fight over this proposal during the next several years will result in the breaking of many scholastic lances to the great edification of all onlookers. But there is much here that is solidly noncontroversial, including the chapter on the Ugaritic literature, in which Gordon is a universally acknowledged authority.

The great strength of the other book, Sellers-Carlson, is in its broad coverage, attractive illustrations, chronological tables, bibliographies, and other such aids to the student. While not written in such an exciting style, the volume leaves a sense of amazement at the very richness of the subject and its impact on biblical interpretation. Errors are few, perhaps the outstanding one being the claim (pp. 208-212) that the towns of Lachish, Taanach, Megiddo, and Ashkelon are "mentioned in an Egyptian papyrus of about 2000 B.C." The towns themselves may date back that far, but the papyrus in question is at least a half millennium later, as the reference cited (p. 209) plainly indicates. In one of these cases (Ashkelon), as in the case of Jerusalem also, the earliest mention is in the Execration Texts (about 1850 B.C.), which seem not to have been utilized here, but should have been.

Because of the reviewer's long friendship with Gordon and Sellers in the Near East and over here, it was a great delight to hear them speak again in these new books. The contribution of Carlson is also much appreciated.

W. F. STINESPRING

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**Pilot Project, India: The Story of Rural Development at Etawah, Attar Pradesh.** By ALBERT MAYER and Associates in collaboration with McKim, Marrott and Richard L. Park. Foreword by Pandit Govind Ballabhi Pant, Home Minister, Government of India. xxiv-367 pp. University of California Press, 1958. \$5.50.

This is an exciting book and an important one. It is exciting because it explores on the village level, in the ascending ranks of governmental bureaucracy, and in the

courageous aspirations and endeavors of India's great leaders, those qualities of human nature wherein hope for the world's future mainly lies; a self-giving glad devotion to the welfare of all. The book has real importance because out of ten years of painstaking effort, it clearly and convincingly proves the practicality and effectiveness of such effort and recounts the simple steps by which men and women may be moved to feel, think and act together to find the better life. This is in real measure accomplished between Brahmans and untouchables, between government officials and village peasants. It is equally significant in its demonstration of the ability of some men so to transcend the barriers and prejudices that separate Occident and Orient as to build fellowship in shared ideals and the hard struggle toward their practical realization. Brotherhood is discovered to be a reality.

Albert Mayer, architect and city planner, while serving in India as an officer in the United States Army Engineers from 1942 to 1945 chose the unusual and officially frowned upon relation to a strange environment. He tried sincerely and humbly to understand where others disdained and rejected. He read widely and voraciously. Wherever he traveled he listened, he asked questions. He intimately discovered greatness and the tragedy of massed ignorance and hunger and ill health. And in 1945 he met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, recently released from jail by the authorities.

"In the light of India's coming inevitable freedom" he discussed that future with Nehru at his home in Allahabad, the two often talking together far into the night. And, greatly moved, he dared to say "what *he* would do." He urged pilot projects as initial experiments toward the better life that with freedom all India would be demanding. Some six months after he had returned home, he received a letter from Prime Minister Nehru inviting him back to help "to build up community life on a higher scale without breaking up the old foundations." And he added: "From the talks we had in Allahabad I feel that not only your technical knowledge and experience, but even more so your psychological approach to these problems will be of great help. The average American might well feel disgusted with many things in India which are entirely new to him and which do not fit in with his scheme of life. I think you will not feel that way."

In late 1946 Mr. Mayer returned to India, prepared a village development plan of wide scope which in February, 1947, the U. P. legislature accepted with its proposed budget. In September, 1948, after intensive study and conference, the Etawah district was chosen and work begun first in some seventy villages. With the exception of Mr. Mayer and two of his associates, the staff was entirely Indian and the center and core was made up of village level workers carefully chosen and trained. "The planning and the decisions reached were shared in by every worker . . . And this whole attitude and method of understanding and mutuality was reflected in the village and in villagers' attitudes. There were no arbitrary decisions or changes by some higher official." (p. 65)

By August, 1952, the work had been extended to cover 100 villages, and later two additional blocks were added to make a total of nearly 300. Within four years under government direction nearly a thousand development areas in all India were organized largely under the administrative framework evolved in the Etawah projects. Under the second Five-Year Plan every one of the nation's half-million villages is scheduled to be included (p. 312).

The secrets of Etawah's success are of basic importance. The start in each

village was in terms of the villagers' own keenest sense of need. Nothing was "put over in a hurry," but always time and opportunity were given to assimilate and understand and desire what had been done and what was yet to be done. Both in administrative staff and in contacts with villagers, opinions were sought and considered so that everyone felt he had status and a share in what was being done.

That the Etawah Project accomplished much is proven not only in this alerted and vigorous response of many thousands of villagers but also in the tremendous physical and material gains that were made. They include Agriculture, Agricultural Implements, Animal Husbandry, Soil Conservation, Public Works, Environmental Sanitation and Public Health, Rural Industry, Co-operatives, and Work with Women. Nowhere in print is there better case material on the techniques and principles of engineered social change. Nowhere is there more convincing proof that man's ageless yearning for world brotherhood is not an impossible dream.

ARTHUR L. SWIFT, JR.

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**Human Nature Under God.** By OREN HULING BAKER. New York: Association Press, 1958. 316 pp. \$4.50.

In this book, Dr. Baker undertakes a very formidable task. This is indicated by the subtitle to this book: "Man's growth from self-hood to person-hood in the light of biblical revelation and the insights of modern psychology." He divides his attempt into two major parts, "The soul of Israel" and "Man the person."

The first part covers the development of the concept of man's self in the Hebraic Christian tradition from Abraham to Paul. The author does not want to use the biblical texts as proofs for psychological tenets. Nor does he want to use the Bible as a collection of case material. What he does is to deduce from the biblical accounts of several persons and historical situations, precisely those theological and psychological conclusions which he needs to prove his peculiar distinction between self and person. Somewhat naively, he believes that, at this point, the Bible and psychology come together in our understanding of the inner life. The author believes that both these terms describe different aspects of the soul. "The first acknowledges the social origin of personality: the second designates the individual's unique reactions to social experience in the search for meaning and destiny" (p. 12, Introduction).

Dr. Baker takes great pains to be just to the historicity of the biblical text, but also makes it equally the universal expression of man's inner struggle for religious self-understanding. Psychology becomes a useful tool in such endeavor. One example may suffice. On page 272, the author praises the Book of Job as a primary illustration of human isolation. In this process, the "friends" swiftly, but unconvincingly, become Job's "own inward attempt, with the best wisdom available, to think his way out of the bewilderment that follows sudden catastrophic misfortune ultimately affecting him most acutely at the very center of his being." This book is over-full of such strange mixtures of biblical allegorizing, theological lightfootedness and psychological free-wheeling. When one takes into account the extremely smooth, but sometimes verbose and sermonizing, style of the writer, one can imagine that this volume will make good meditative reading for those who wish to follow today's fashionable trend of having religious material cooked over in a psychological sauce.

The second part, which adroitly deals with such problems as biology and culture,

religion and psychotherapy, the work of God, is still less inhibited in demonstrating that once the author's distinction between self-hood and person-hood is accepted, science and theology fall neatly in their place toward a harmony which sounds too good to be true. This easy smoothing out of deep-seated distinctions between the behavioral sciences and religion takes its heavy toll in accuracy when the sciences are discussed. One cannot help wondering why so much confusion and tragedy should have shaken the first part of the twentieth century if it takes only about 300 small pages to clear up what human nature under God is all about. The price to be paid is clear. One has to take God for granted, the way Dr. Baker knows him; the Bible has to be understood as a human journey toward inner self-consciousness; and finally, and most seriously of all, we must abandon the painstaking scientific attitude of avoiding premature generalizations in order to make room for relevant evidence.

This book, in short, represents a great disservice to a realistic religious appraisal of human nature. It caters to the superficial desire of so many people to smooth over the real problem which we had better face, namely that the human dilemma is not to be explained away, but to be experienced courageously as the fountainhead for the discovery of our true nature. Even a very eloquent attempt to save religion on a level where it has outlived its relevance only discredits it further in the eyes of those who search honestly. Could we not perhaps be much more religiously reverent, by starting exactly where the biblical writers started in their time: with a brutally frank appraisal of our precise predicament? And from there on, might we not ask what it means, in this situation, to be a human being who wants to be at once realistic and able to see through the meaning of our time?

HANS HOFMANN

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**Testament of Vision.** By HENRY ZYLSTRA. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1958. 234 pp. \$3.50.

Miscellaneous writings on literature, education, religion, and letters, gathered by friends after the author's untimely death in Holland. The essays on education and religion are, for the most part, shallow and dogmatic. They could have been eliminated without loss. But not so with the essays on literature and the letters.

The author pleads for a restoring of status to literature. Great novelists "are creatively gifted, they have magnitude of mind, they have quality and range of imagination, and they are able therefore to disclose and to explore sensitively and profoundly" (p. 53). In the neat little essay, "Wordsworth and Hollywood," the author contends that the corruption of the films is as much a result as it is a cause of our cultural decay. This is a striking reversal.

The letters were written during the war. They express profound thoughts in simple language. Samples: "Character only dignifies us, and the rest is only instrumental to it" (p. 207). "There is no time now to write of the shrines, or the sweet smiles of the singularly obese gods of the East. The shrines are ugly, squat; there is no freedom in them. You see it at a glance. The god is false." (p. 226)

This is a truly worthy book, for it deals with great questions on a dignified level. The author never descends to the trivial or the vulgar. But through this



defense of wisdom there runs a threat of parochial, almost clannish, reasoning. While the author chides the Christian Reformed Church for its cultic fears and stagnation, he nonetheless assumes that Dutch Calvinism in general, and the Christian Reformed Church in particular, are the alpha and the omega of truth, the fountainhead of culture, and the custodian of the arts and the humanities. This conviction is everywhere assumed, never proved. Nor is there the least hint that proof is necessary. Apparently the claims of Calvinism are self-evident to Dutchmen.

The author, it seems, mirrors some traits of John Henry Newman. While Newman entertained great ideas and charming expressions, he not only substituted the "illative sense" for general verification but he confused the Church universal with a denomination.

I wish I could have known the author. He must have been a fine man. I say this because it takes a fine man to be a fine teacher of literature. This is true at Calvin College or anywhere else.

EDWARD JOHN CARNELL

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**Eucharist and Sacrifice.** By GUSTAF AULÉN. Translated by Eric H. Wahlstrom. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958. xiv-212 pp. \$3.50.

This solid little book makes a valuable contribution to current discussion of the Eucharist as sacrifice. We shall perhaps come closest to doing justice to its wide range of interest if we describe it as a re-working of Luther's teaching, tested by the standard of Scripture and addressed to modern ecumenical concern with eucharistic faith and practice. Its presentation of Luther's doctrine is fresh, while its treatment of what others have said is scrupulously fair. Obviously the former Bishop of Strängnäs has been a good listener as well as a distinguished author.

Almost every page provokes comment. Anglicans, for instance, may wonder if it is only during the last century that "some theologians within the Church of England have strongly emphasized continuity with the ancient church" (p. 177)—but I must stick to the main thesis. "The sacrifice of Christ, perfected in his death," Aulén tells us, "is not merely something that happened once in the past. It is a sacrifice that is valid for all time and all generations, and it is realized in the living present when the glorified Lord connects his presence in the eucharist with the bread and wine" (p. 94). On this basis, Aulén makes very strong statements about Christ's sacrifice (to which the sacrifices of Christians are linked) as the essential content of the eucharistic action.

This doctrine is a long step forward from a simply negative approach to the eucharistic sacrifice. Aulén declines, however, to take the further step of saying, in traditional terms, that Christ is *offered* by the Church. His discussion of the cross as climax of a life of sacrifice and his lucid treatment of the relation of Christ's death to his heavenly priesthood make it plain that this refusal does not depend on that naive identification of sacrifice with death in which many Anglicans have located the root error of everyone else's eucharistic doctrine. Aulén's real difficulty, I suggest, is his failure to understand the sacramental efficacy of the acts of the Church as Christ's Body.

While his treatment of Christ's sacrifice of human obedience is far in advance of his *Christus Victor*, which seemed to find no place for human action Godwards, it is at least arguable that he still does not see all that the truth of the Word's

becoming *homoousios* with us means for our understanding of the Church's life and action in Christ. As it is, Aulén leaves us wondering why the "words of institution" seem to suggest that the Church really does make the *anamnesis* of Christ's sacrifice.

EUGENE R. FAIRWEATHER

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**Calvin: Commentaries.** Translated and edited by JOSEPH HAROUTUNIAN with the collaboration of LOUISE PETTIBONE SMITH. Library of Christian Classics, Volume XXIII. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. 414 pp. \$5.00.

It would be well if those who see in Calvin a mind of "iron cogency" (Huizenga) or a "doctrinaire geometer" (quite recently, P. Jourda) would take the time to read this book. Here in Calvin's biblical commentary the old stereotype—itsself doctrinaire and of seeming iron endurance—fades perceptibly. The Calvin of the commentaries is at his best: thoughtful, learned, refreshingly unforced and unhackneyed, sensitive to nuance, modest among differences of opinion and varieties of interpretation. "It is of course highly desirable that we should constantly agree in our understanding of Scripture passages," he writes introducing his *Romans*, "but there is no hope for such a thing in this life."

Although Calvin is on occasion something of a virtuoso at harmonizing the disparate, the occasions are rare among the many thousand pages of patient, critical, intelligent biblical work. He works with spirit and zeal, but will quietly discard a tradition-hallowed proof-text on historical or philological grounds. He reads the ancient texts with the skill, caution, and historical learning of his humanistic training, and at the same time he expounds the gospel (even in the Old Testament) for the contemporary church in his own tumultuous century. Professor Haroutunian's introduction presents this double aspect as well as it has ever been done. Beyond this general setting the introduction offers interesting discussion of Calvin's view of the Bible and the themes around which the collection has been built. I think the doctrines of providence and predestination are less clearly distinguished in these paragraphs than in the selections that follow, and that the little section "Calvin as Historian" does not quite fit its title, but these are minor complaints.

Professors Haroutunian and Smith have achieved their aim of selecting from the whole range of Calvin's commentaries materials which are representative of Calvin's work, and yet they "did not ignore present day issues . . . in theology and practical church life." The materials are arranged freely under the topics: Bible, Knowledge of God, Jesus Christ, the Christian Life, Faith, Providence, Election and Predestination, Ethics, and the Church. Within each of these general chapter headings are several subdivisions which unfortunately are not printed in the table of contents. A very thorough index traces many themes not mentioned in the headings. The excellence of this selection has given me an answer, finally, to students and pastors who want to know which one or two of Calvin's commentaries to buy first. And, by the way, the table of selections at the end might provide a fair rule of thumb for further purchase; but *Romans* and *Psalms* might be more emphasized.

The only item in the volume that has never before appeared in English deserves some discussion. It is the early (1534) preface to a French translation of the New Testament. The development and treatment of the theme seems to echo patristic times. The style is a bit self-consciously rhetorical as in the *Institutes* of 1536, but

the great achievement lies in exalting Christ and the gospel as the central and sole concern of Scripture. The freshness and vigor of the early Reformation, which had only shortly before dawned in Calvin's own life, make the essay something of a hymn. There is no short piece in all his writings more profitable to read.

Professor Haroutunian has shown himself a gifted translator. He has both an easy style and the theological imagination to be free and natural without misleading. The insufferable verbosity of the old translations is gone (let the reader compare, e.g., Pringle's *Second Timothy*) and there is here, as there should be, genuine pleasure in reading Calvin.

EDWARD A. DOWEY, JR.

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Princeton, New Jersey.

**The Christian Teacher.** By PERRY D. LEFEVRE. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958. 176 pp. \$2.75.

Professor LeFevre of the University of Chicago addresses himself directly and effectively to two basic questions: "What are the Christian teacher's concerns in higher education?" and "What difference does it make in an individual's teaching if he takes both his teaching and his Christian faith seriously?" The writer, finding the answer to these questions in Christian vocation, eschews novelty; but there is freshness, actuality, and urgent relevance in his exposition.

Hatred, injury, doubt, despair, darkness, and the tragic predicament of man are evident in education as in all human life today; it is the vocation of the Christian teacher to see in Christian love "a power for salvation, for fulfillment, for the transmutation, if not the abolition, of tragedy." This welcome note of realistic and Christian hope sounds throughout the book, and therein we have a much-needed antidote to the complacency of despair which has eaten the heart out of so much of ostensibly Christian writing in our troubled day and generation. As basis of this hope Dr. LeFevre has the conviction of "the unity of all knowledge and truth. All truth is God's truth." That seems platitudinous; yet unless it is recognized and acted upon, there can be no real justification for the study of religion as Christian theology in a liberal arts curriculum and no Christian vocation in teaching.

In the three central chapters Dr. LeFevre deals with the Christian teacher's relation to the humanities, to the social and the natural sciences. In these studies there are "latent or implicit theological issues" and matters of "ultimate concern." Here, as throughout, the writer's indebtedness to Tillich is evident, and he warns those who scorn objectivity and detachment that "there may be a concerned objectivity and committed detachment which are both a phase of the theological task and a part of the life of faith."

In the rest of the book there are excellent chapters on method and on the teacher-student relationship. In his account of the latter the writer draws from Buber, and there is the timely recognition that the ideal mutual dialogue between teacher and student is not one of pure inclusion: "It is one-sided. The student is unable to enter fully the teacher's world. If it loses its one-sidedness it loses its essence."

Altogether this is a book which no enquiring teacher can read without emerging more widely and deeply informed, and, to that extent, a better teacher.

ROBERT CRAIG

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**Conscience on Campus: An Interpretation of Christian Ethics for College Life.** By WALDO BEACH. New York: Association Press, 1958. 124 pp. \$2.50.

This is a worthy addition to the Haddam House Books. Like most of its predecessors it is short and notably well-written. This book will be of real benefit to students and instructors, illuminating the basic moral tensions within the college community and exploring the moral implications of various facets of college life.

Christian ethics is not legalism, emotional pietism, or mere humanitarianism. Dr. Beach's thesis is that Christian ethics is grounded in the Christian faith. "The great single norm of human action which Christian ethics derives from its theology is the norm of faithful love" (p. 16), expressed in the Great Commandment. That American colleges need this faith and this ethic is shown by the deep insecurities reflected in religion substitutes and by the "intellectual anarchy of the college community" (p. 30). After developing the meaning of Christian love and defending its relevance to all of college life, Dr. Beach sketches its application to several of the perennial problems of the campus: vocational choices, fraternity-sorority issues, drinking, sex, "ivory-towerism," and others.

This reviewer would raise two issues. The first concerns the relation of Greek and Christian ethics. Dr. Beach rejects what he calls the "standards" self-realizationist ethics of "most philosophy departments" (p. 42) as Greek, rational, and egocentric. His treatment seems rather stock and oversimplified. A much more fundamental meeting between the Greek ideal and Christian ethics is called for. The second issue concerns the amount of flexibility (laxity would be too strong) advocated in the application of Christian ethics to the fraternity system and the drinking problem, but not, fortunately, extended to the ethics of sex. One wonders whether this flexibility grows out of the demands of Christian love more than out of the pressures of our relativistic culture. Note that the chapter affirming the absolute and ultimate principle of Christian love is entitled "The Slant."

JOHN HILLMAN LAVELY

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**The Protestant Ministry.** By DANIEL JENKINS. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1958. 194 pp. \$3.00.

Daniel Jenkins, who combines a Congregational pastorate in England with a professorship in Chicago, has written his sixth book on the doctrine and life of the Church. The present volume includes three revised chapters from his earlier *The Gift of Ministry*, which was never published in the United States. The perspective out of which these reflections on the ministry are written is deeply informed by the Congregationalism of P. T. Forsyth, contemporary biblical theology and particularly that of Karl Barth, and the ecumenical movement. Jenkins combines theological acumen with involvement in the life of a parish and the whole of contemporary society. Thus the book is really theological reflection on the life and work of a minister. The manner of thinking is dialectical in an illuminating way: e.g. Jenkins poses orthodoxy against heresy so that one sees the dangers in each and the need to run the risk of both.

I find the section on "The Inner Life of the Minister" to be as searching as it was in the earlier edition. Here Jenkins develops our vocation to represent Christ to man, and man to Christ, and our temptations to rely on "grace through

personality" or to rest solely on the "objective" marks of the Church. At points throughout the book I disagree with Jenkins, but this is one of the two or three best discussions of the person and work of the minister that we have. At times the expressions are caustic (denying Jenkins' own plea for sympathetic understanding of other points of view), but the sharpness adds to the provocative character of the book.

JAMES GUSTAFSON

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**Rabbinic Stories for Christian Ministers and Teachers.** By WILLIAM B. SILVERMAN. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958. 220 pp. \$3.50.

Why did the Hasidic rabbis teach that everyone must have two pockets? What is the significance of the fact that, according to the Jewish calendar, the day begins at sundown? What did Rabbi Menahem Mendel mean when he said that "upright kneeling, silent screaming, and motionless dance" are descriptive of a faithful Jew? Why are our fingers tapered like pegs? What is the meaning of the absence from the Hebrew vocabulary of a word denoting "marriage?" And why are Jewish festivals and holidays home-centered rather than synagogue-centered?

The answers to these and scores of other intriguing questions will be found within the covers of this absorbing book of Dr. Silverman. He will be a dullard, indeed, minister, teacher, or general reader alike, who does not find these answers, and many of the rabbinic stories recorded here, clamoring for use in pulpit, classroom, or in many a good conversation.

This anthology will evoke gratitude from countless Christian readers (and non-Christian ones, too) for whom the formidable immensity of the Hebrew extra-biblical literature in Midrash, Talmud and Hasidism has hitherto been territory unexplored.

It is carefully arranged in chapters under such headings as "God," "Man," "Prayer," "Faith," "Justice," "Eternal Life" and other themes. The chapters themselves are helpfully subdivided. There is a useful index. And the author's own unobtrusive comments throughout add considerably to the book's interest. The fact that Halford E. Luccock has written a glowing preface should assure any skeptic that there is indeed much gold to be found in these pages.

HAROLD G. NEWSHAM

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**The World Is Learning Compassion.** By FRANK C. LAUBACH. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1958. 251 pp. \$3.50.

Those who know Frank C. Laubach's humanitarian career as missionary and literacy expert, as practical mystic and preacher, will always think of him with gratitude. He has served faithfully and imaginatively. He has been one of those whom he personally admires in this book, who go out into the highways and byways to do good to others.

Dr. Laubach has come through two world wars with amazing optimism about the possibilities of man with God's help to establish peace, create good will, and spread the blessings of health and prosperity throughout all nations. He feels that the world is really learning how to show compassion, thus putting into effect the

intent and goal of Jesus. He has many chapters outlining the spread of compassionate concern across the centuries, ranging from missions to the Colombo Plan. He believes in the coming of a world of abundance, provided we survive. In this America must take the lead, he believes. "The moment government, church, business, and philanthropy join hands in all-out, sincere, unselfish effort, the whole world will love us."

But do we practice compassion in order that others will love us? And is the New Testament *eschaton* really so hopeful about man's potentialities as this good, sincere man believes?

KENDIG BRUBAKER CULLY

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Evanston, Illinois.

**To Plow With Hope.** By DONALD K. FARIS. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. 223 pp. \$3.75.

This book, with a series of excellent documentary photographs by Joseph Breitenbach, is strangely and fascinatingly combined of accomplishment and failure, of impressive acts of helpfulness across the whole world and of massive poverty and hunger and disease. It recounts the vast economic needs of the less developed areas of the world. It gives a heart-warming picture of the action being taken to meet these needs—by the United Nations, the United States Government, the Colombo Plan, by voluntary agencies, by Russia, and by the National Development Programs among the underdeveloped peoples themselves—action more vast than ever before in history. It dares to face the awful gap remaining between what is done and what is needed with the assurance that there is real hope for man's survival because of the imperative love undiscouraged and unailing, in spite of all that would deny and confound it.

ARTHUR L. SWIFT, JR.

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**The Strong Comfort of God.** By ERNEST LEE STOFFEL. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1958. 159 pp. \$3.50.

These chapters appear to be thinly disguised sermons designed for a wider audience than a specific congregation. This is important to note in regard to the purpose and the method of exposition of the author. He has not given us a systematic theological treatise on God's goodness. Rather, here is a preacher proclaiming God's goodness in a helpful way.

The theme of the book is that "the Christian Faith has its strong assurance but also its strong discipline and its strong command. This is the strong comfort of God." The book has remarkable unity around this theme, as even the chapters are divided into the categories of assurance, discipline, and command. The substance is unashamedly doctrinal. It is heartening to know of a working pastor who has disciplined himself to the kind of biblical-theological study which underlies these pages. Apart from over-quotation, Stoffel has a good writing style—visual, moving, and forceful. The outline of each chapter is not clear, however. The printed subheads have no necessary relationship to the divisions of the written material.

Some will feel that the strong commands of God are probably much stronger



than Mr. Stoffel makes them here—especially in regard to social questions. But all will be helped by the positive statement of faith which this book reveals.

RONALD E. SLEETH

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John Marco Allegro now has another book on Qumrân: *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Doubleday, \$5.00). This is a beautiful volume copiously illustrated with splendid photographs showing the places where the Scrolls were found, the desert surroundings, the remains of the community, the processes of excavation and research. The introductory text, in concise, readable chapters, takes about one-fourth of the book; the rest consists of the photographs with their explanations.

Two books concerning the Lord's Supper: (1) *The Table of the Lord: A Communion Encyclopedia*, edited by Charles L. Wallis (Harper, \$3.95). Its materials are "drawn from many communions and many ages," classic and contemporary: prayers, music, scripture, addresses, poems. Helpful for preaching as well as arranging the worship; well indexed. (2) *Invitation to Commune*, by Charles Ray Goff (Abingdon, \$1.75). A lucid step-by-step interpretation of the preparation for Holy Communion, to help the layman genuinely participate in the service.

A *Life of Evelyn Underhill* has been written by Margaret Cropper, completing a work started by Lucy Menzies (Harper, \$3.75); both were intimate friends of hers. An appealing account of this gifted writer on mysticism, creative churchwoman, spiritual director, ecumenicist, pacifist, and mystic.

Westminster's latest *Library of Christian Classics* volume is Volume XII, *Western Asceticism*, edited by Owen Chadwick, Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge. It presents three important documents: *The Sayings of the Fathers* (the *Apophthegmata* of the Egyptian monks which greatly influenced the West through its translation into Latin in the sixth century), *The Conferences of Cassian*, and *The Rule of St. Benedict*. (\$5.00.)

Franklin H. Littell's *The Anabaptist View of the Church* (Starr King Press, Boston, \$6.00), has come out in a thoroughly revised and enlarged edition. Winner of the Brewer prize of the American Society of Church History, this book offers "a comprehensive view of the whole of the Radical Reformation and a detailed analysis of the regnant doctrinal and organizational principles of the left-wing movement."

Two biblical novels have come to us, both slender in size but fascinating: *Jabbok*, by Robert J. Hoyer (Muhlenberg, \$2.75), and *The Novice of Qumrân*, by Isabel Brogan (Exposition Press, New York, \$3.00). The former, dealing with Jacob's night of struggle with the Angel, climaxing his life story, is of unusually fine caliber. Written in down-to-earth yet poetic style, it is both imaginative and realistic in depicting Jacob's growth in consciousness and that of others in his family, with the impact of the Divine presence upon them. The latter book treats of the young Jesus spending one of his "hidden years" in the Dead Sea monastery, arousing both love and conflict in the community, as his direct communion with God encounters the devout but rigid patterns of the Manual of Discipline and also impinges on a visiting Pharisee of the liberal Gamaliel type.

E. H. L.



